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WORKS

SAMUEL JOHNSON, M.D.

IN ELEVEN VOLUMES

THE

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A

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IN ELEVEN VOLUMES.



Painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Engraved by John Hall, Engraver to his Majesty.

THE
WORKS

of
Samuel Johnson, LL. D.

TOGETHER WITH

HIS LIFE,

AND

NOTES ON HIS LIVES OF THE POETS.

By Sir JOHN HAWKINS, Knt.

IN ELEVEN VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N:

Printed by J. Sturges, J. Richardson and Sons, T. Payne and Sons, L. Davis,
W. White and Sons, T. Longman, R. Lee, J. Sedgwick, H. Baskin, J. P. Collier,
J. Johnson, C. Dilly, T. Veivers, W. Nichol, G. G. J. and J. Robinson,
T. Cadell, T. Curran, J. Nichols, J. Bell, R. Baldwin, E. Curran, P. Elmsly,
W. G. Wood, J. Knox, R. Faulner, Leigh and Sothby, G. Nick, J. Minors,
J. Galt, W. Lowndes, T. Evans, W. Berr, S. Hayes, G. and T. White,
T. and J. Curran, W. Fox, P. McGee, D. Ogilvie, B. Collins, L. Nodding,
and R. James.

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MDCCCLXXXVII.

Wb 168/1179

TO
GEORGE THE THIRD,
KING OF GREAT-BRITAIN, &c.

THESE VOLUMES,
THE WORKS OF AN AUTHOR
WHOM HIS MAJESTY'S BOUNTY RAISED
FROM A STATE OF INDIGENCE
TO THE ENJOYMENT OF LEARNED LEISURE,
AND AN EXEMPTION FROM WORLDLY SOLICITUDE,

ARE,
WITH THE MOST PROFOUND VENERATION,
INSCRIBED,

BY
HIS MAJESTY'S DUTIFUL SUBJECT
AND MOST DEVOTED SERVANT,

THE EDITOR.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author of the several pieces contained in the ensuing Volumes, had meditated a complete edition of his Works, but had made small progress in his design even a few months before his decease, when his infirmities obliged him to abandon it. By certain papers, however, that came to my hands, he had so far ascertained the particulars of his intended publication as to enable me to carry his purpose into execution.

Thus informed, I have, at the request of some of his friends, taken upon myself the office of his Editor, and accordingly here present to view as complete a collection of the various writings of Dr. Samuel Johnson as I was able to form, and the directions he left behind him would permit me to publish.

As

As I stood engaged, by a promise made to him a short time before his decease, to be as well the guardian of his fame as an executor of his will, I thought I could no way better discharge the former of these obligations than by giving to the world a succinct narration of the principal events of his life, interspersed with such particulars as best served to delineate and illustrate his character; in the performance of which task, having endeavoured with equal care to avoid the extremes of praise and blame, I trust to the charity, the gratitude, and the justice of impartial posterity, that the failings of a man whose whole life was a conflict with pain and adversity, will either be forgiven or forgotten, and that the remembrance of his virtues, and a reverence for the wonderful endowments of his mind, and his zeal in the employment of them to the best purposes, will be coeval with those excellent lessons of religion, morality, and æconomical wisdom, which he has left behind him.

In the Lives of the Poets I have inserted notes that contain either additional facts, or that tend to explain particular passages. The paucity of anecdotes in this part of the Author's writings, it is presumed, will justify this liberty, it being a known
part

part of his character, that he was more ingenious in critical disquisition than industrious in collecting memoirs; so that, in many instances, what he calls the life of a poet may more properly be termed an examen of his works.

Of the Latin pieces in the last of these volumes, many were composed in those intervals of ease, which during his last illness he at times experienced: others, and those the greater number, were the employment of his thoughts, when, being retired to rest, the powers of sleep failed him, when the remission of pain became to him positive pleasure, and having no outward objects present to his view, his ever-active imagination had liberty to wander through the boundless regions of fancy, and his reason to investigate the most important and sublime truths. The originals, as they were from time to time committed to writing, were by him delivered to Mr. Langton, with directions to publish them; and it is to that gentleman that we owe the pleasure of perusing, in this form, these the most recent effusions of his genius, and latest evidences of his piety.

Besides the Pieces contained in the ensuing Volumes, there is extant, of Dr. Johnson's writing,

a small volume, entitled " Prayers and Meditations," the profits whereof he directed to be employed for a charitable purpose, mentioned in the preface thereto. That they are not included in this edition of his Works, will therefore need no apology.

J. H.

THE
L I F E
OF
Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

THE
LIFE
OF
DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

THE
L I F E
O F
Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

THE general sense of mankind, and the practice of the learned in all ages, have given a sanction to biographical history, and concurred to recommend that precept of the wise son of Sirach, in which we are exhorted to ‘praise famous men, such as by their counsels and by their knowledge of learning were meet for the people,—and were wise and eloquent in their instructions,—and such as recited verses in writing*.’ In each of these faculties did the person, whose history I am about to write, so greatly excel, that, except for my presumption in the attempt to display his worth, the undertaking may be thought to need no apology; especially if we contemplate, together with his mental endowments, those moral qualities which distinguished him, and reflect that, in an age when literary acquisitions and

* Ecclus. Chap. XLIV. Verse 1, et seqq.

scientific improvements are rated at their utmost value, he rested not in the applause which these procured him ; but adorned the character of a scholar and a philosopher with that of a christian.

Justified, as I trust, thus far in the opinion of the reader, I may, nevertheless, stand in need of his excuse ; for that, in the narration of facts that respect others, I have oftener spoke of myself, and in my own person, than the practice of some writers will warrant. To this objection, if any shall please to make it, I answer, that the reverse of wrong is not always right. By the office I have undertaken I stand engaged to relate facts to which I was a witness, conversations in which I was a party, and to record memorable sayings uttered only to myself. Whoever attends to these circumstances, must, besides the disgust which such an affectation of humility would excite, be convinced, that in some instances, the avoiding of egotisms had been extremely difficult, and in many impossible.

SAMUEL JOHNSON, the subject of the following memoirs, was the elder of the two sons of Michael Johnson, of the city of Lichfield bookseller, and of Sarah his wife, a sister of Dr. Joseph Ford, a physician of great eminence, and father of the famous Cornelius otherwise called Parson Ford.* He was born, as I find

* Of this person, who yet lives in the remembrance of a few of his associates, little can be related but from oral tradition. He was, as I have heard Johnson say, a man of great wit and stupendous parts, but of very profligate manners. He was chaplain to Lord Chesterfield during his residence at the Hague ; but, as his lordship was

find it noted in his diary, on the seventh day of September, 1709: his brother, named Nathanael, was born some years after. Mr. Johnson was a man of eminence in his trade, and of such reputation in the city abovementioned, that he, more than once, bore, for a year, the office of bailiff or chief magistrate thereof, and discharged the duties of that exalted station with honour and applause. It may here be proper, as it will account for some particulars respecting the character of his son Samuel, to mention, that his political principles led him to favour the pretensions of the exiled family, and that though a very honest and sensible man, he, like many others inhabiting the county of Stafford, was a Jacobite.

It may farther be supposed, that he was possessed of some amiable qualities either moral or personal, from a circumstance in his early life, of which evidence is yet remaining. While he was an apprentice at Leek in Staffordshire, a young woman of the same town fell in love with him, and upon his removal to Lichfield followed him, and took lodgings opposite his house. Her passion was not unknown to Mr. Johnson, but he had no inclination to return it, till he heard that it so affected her mind that her life was in danger, when he visited her, and made her a tender of his hand, but feeling the approach of death, she declined it, and shortly after died, and was interred in Lichfield cathedral. In pity

was used to tell him, precluded all hope of preferment by the want of a vice, namely, hypocrisy. It was supposed that the parson in Hogarth's modern midnight conversation, was intended to represent him in his hour of festivity, four in the morning.

THE LIFE OF

to her sufferings, Mr. Johnson caused a stone to be placed over her grave with this inscription :

Here lies the body of
Mrs. ELIZABETH BLANEY, a stranger.

She departed this life,
2d of September, 1694.

The first born child of Mr. Johnson and his wife, their son Samuel, had the misfortune to receive, together with its nutriment derived from a hired nurse, the seeds of that disease which troubled him through life, the struma, or, as it is called, the king's-evil; for the cure whereof his mother, agreeable to the opinion then entertained of the efficacy of the royal touch, presented him to Queen Anne, who, for the last time, as it is said, that she ever performed that office, with her accustomed grace and benignity administered to the child as much of that healing quality as it was in her power to dispense, and hung about his neck the usual amulet of an angel of gold, with the impress of St. Michael the archangel on the one side, and a ship under full sail on the other.* It was probably this

* This healing gift is said to have been derived to our princes from Edward the Confessor, and is recorded by his historian, Alured Rivalensis. In Stow's annals we have a relation of the first cure of this kind which Edward performed; but, as it is rather disgusting to read it, I chuse to give it in the words of the author from whence it is apparently taken, with this remark, that the kings of France lay claim to the same miraculous power. *Adolescentula quædam tradita nuptiis duplici laborabat incommodo. Nam faciem ejus morbus deformaverat, amorem viri sterilitas proles ademerat: sub faucibus quippe quasi glandes ei succreverant, quæ totam faciem deformi tumore foedantes, putrefactis sub cute humoribus, sanguinem in saniem verterant,*

this disease that deprived him of the sight of his left eye, for he has been heard to say, that he never remembered to have enjoyed the use of it.

‘ verterant, inde nati vermes odorem teterrimum exhalabant. Ita
 ‘ viro incutiebatur morbus horrorem, sterilitas minuebat affectum.
 ‘ Vivebat infelix mulier odiosa marito, parentibus onerosa. Rarus
 ‘ ad eam vel amicorum accessus propter fætores, vel aspectus viri
 ‘ propter horrorem. Hinc dolor, hinc lacrimæ, hinc die noctuque
 ‘ suspiria, cum ei vel sterilitas opprobrium, vel contemptum infir-
 ‘ mitas generaret. Industriam medicorum avertebat inopia. Quid
 ‘ ageret misera? Quod solum supererat, ubi humanum deerat divi-
 ‘ num precabatur auxilium, quasi in illam illius æque miserae mulieris
 ‘ vocem erumpens, *Peto, Domine, ut de vinculo improprietatis hujus ab-*
 ‘ *solvas me, aut certe super terram eripias me.* Jubetur tandem in
 ‘ somnis adire palacium, ex regiis manibus sperare remedium,
 ‘ quibus si lota, si tacta, si signata foret, reciperet ejus meritis sani-
 ‘ tatem. Expergefacta mulier, sexus simul et conditionis oblita,
 ‘ prorumpit in curiam, regis se repræsentat obtutibus, exponit oracu-
 ‘ lum, auxilium deprecatur. Ille more suo victus pietate, nec sordes
 ‘ cavit, nec fætores exhorruit. Allata denique aqua, partes corporis
 ‘ quas morbus fœdaverat propriis manibus lavit, locaque tumentia
 ‘ contrectans digitis signum sanctæ crucis impressit. Quid plura?
 ‘ Subito rupta cute, cum sanie vermes ebulliunt, resedit tumor, dolor
 ‘ omnis abcessit: ammirantibus qui aderant tantam sub purpura
 ‘ sanctitatem, tantam sceptrigeris manibus inesse virtutem. Paucis
 ‘ vero diebus substitit in curia mulier regiis ministris necessaria mi-
 ‘ nistrantibus, donec obducta vulneribus cicatrice incolumis rediret
 ‘ ad propria. Verum ut nichil deesset regi ad gloriam, pauperculæ
 ‘ nichil ad gratiam, donatur sterili inopina fœcunditas, ventrisque sui
 ‘ desiderato fructu ditata, facile sibi mariti gratiam conciliavit.’

The reader will find much curious matter relating to the royal touch, in Mr. Barrington’s observations on ancient statutes 107, and in Chambers’s dictionary, art. EVIL, to which I shall add, that the vindication of this power, as inherent in the pretender, by Mr. Carte, destroyed the credit of his intended history of England, and put a stop to the completion of it.

The ritual for this is to be found in Bishop Sparrow’s collection of articles, canons, &c. and also in all or most of the impressions of the Common Prayer Book, printed in Queen Anne’s reign, but in these latter with great variations.

It may seem a ridiculous attempt to trace the dawn of his poetical faculty so far back as to his very infancy; but the following incident I am compelled to mention, as it is well attested, and therefore makes part of his history. When he was about three years old, his mother had a brood of eleven ducklings, which she permitted him to call his own. It happened that in playing about he trod on and killed one of them, upon which running to his mother, he, in great emotion bid her write. Write, child? said she, what must I write? Why write, answered he, so:

Here lies good Master Duck,
That Samuel Johnson trod on,
If't had liv'd 'twould have been good luck,
For then there'd been an odd one.
and she wrote accordingly.

Being arrived at a proper age for grammatical instruction, he was placed in the free school of Lichfield, of which Mr. Hunter was then master. The progress he made in his learning soon attracted the notice of his teachers; and among other discernible qualities that distinguished him from the rest of the school, he was bold, active and enterprising, so that without affecting it, the seniors in the school looked on him as their head and leader, and readily acquiesced in whatever he proposed or did. There dwelt at Lichfield a gentleman of the name of Butt, the father of the reverend Mr. Butt, now a King's Chaplain, to whose house on holidays and in school-vacations he was ever welcome. The children in the family, perhaps offended with the rudeness of his behaviour, would frequently call him the great boy, which the father once overhearing, said, 'you

‘ you call him the great boy, but take my word for it,
‘ he will one day prove a great man.’

A more particular character of him while a school-boy, and of his behaviour at school, I find in a paper now before me, written by a person yet living, and of which the following is a copy :

‘ Johnson and I were, early in life, school-fellows at
‘ Lichfield, and for many years in the same class. As
‘ his uncommon abilities for learning far exceeded us,
‘ we endeavoured by every boyish piece of flattery to
‘ gain his assistance, and three of us, by turns, used to
‘ call on him in a morning, on one of whose backs,
‘ supported by the other two, he rode triumphantly
‘ to school. He never associated with us in any of
‘ our diversions, except in the winter when the ice was
‘ firm, to be drawn along by a boy bare-footed. His
‘ ambition to excel was great, though his application
‘ to books, as far as it appeared, was very trifling. I
‘ could not oblige him more than by sauntering away
‘ every vacation, that occurred, in the fields, during
‘ which time he was more engaged in talking to him-
‘ self than his companion. Verses or themes he would
‘ dictate to his favourites, but he would never be at
‘ the trouble of writing them. His dislike to business
‘ was so great, that he would procrastinate his exer-
‘ cises to the last hour. I have known him after a
‘ long vacation, in which we were rather severely
‘ tasked, return to school an hour earlier in the morn-
‘ ing, and begin one of his exercises, in which he pur-
‘ posely left some faults, in order to gain time to finish
‘ the rest.

‘ I never knew him corrected at school, unless it
‘ was for talking and diverting other boys from their

‘ business, by which, perhaps, he might hope to keep
 ‘ his ascendancy. He was uncommonly inquisitive,
 ‘ and his memory so tenacious, that whatever he read
 ‘ or heard he never forgot. I remember rehearsing
 ‘ to him eighteen verses, which after a little pause he
 ‘ repeated verbatim, except one epithet, which im-
 ‘ proved the line.

‘ After a long absence from Lichfield, when he re-
 ‘ turned I was apprehensive of something wrong in his
 ‘ constitution, which might either impair his intellect
 ‘ or endanger his life, but, thanks to Almighty God,
 ‘ my fears have proved false.’

In the autumn of the year 1725, he received an invitation from his uncle, Cornelius Ford, to spend a few days with him at his house, which I conjecture to have been on a living of his in one of the counties bordering upon Staffordshire; but it seems that the uncle, discovering that the boy was possessed of uncommon parts, was unwilling to let him return, and to make up for the loss he might sustain by his absence from school, became his instructor in the classics, and farther assisted him in his studies; so that it was not till the Whitsuntide following, that Johnson went back to Lichfield. Whether Mr. Hunter was displeased to find a visit of a few days protracted into a vacation of many months, or that he resented the interference of another person in the tuition of one of his scholars, and he one of the most promising of any under his care, cannot now be known; but, it seems, that at Johnson’s return to Lichfield, he was not received into the school of that city; on the contrary, I am informed, by a person who was his school-fellow there, that he was placed in one at Stourbridge in Worcestershire, under the care of a master named Winkworth,

but who, affecting to be thought allied to the Strafford family, assumed the name of Wentworth.

When his school education was finished, his father, whose circumstances were far from affluent, was for some time at a loss how to dispose of him: he took him home, probably with a view to bring him up to his own trade; for I have heard Johnson say, that he himself was able to bind a book. This suspense continued about two years, at the end whereof, a neighbouring gentleman, Mr. Andrew Corbet, having a son, who had been educated in the same school with Johnson, whom he was about to send to Pembroke college in Oxford, a proposal was made and accepted, that Johnson should attend this son thither, in quality of assistant in his studies; and accordingly, on the 31st day of October, 1728, they were both entered, Corbet as a gentleman-commoner, and Johnson as a commoner.

The college tutor, at that time, was a man named Jordan, whom Johnson, though he loved him for the goodness of his nature, so contemned for the meanness of his abilities, that he would oftener risque the payment of a small fine than attend his lectures; nor was he studious to conceal the reason of his absence. Upon occasion of one such imposition, he said to Jordan, ‘Sir, you have sconded me two-pence for non-attendance at a lecture not worth a penny.’

Whether it was this discouragement in the outset of their studies, or any other ground of disinclination that moved him to it, is not known, but this is certain, that young Corbet could not brook submission to a man who seemed to be little more learned than himself, and that

that having a father living, who was able to dispose of him in various other ways, he, after about two years stay, left the college, and went home.

But the case of Johnson was far different: his fortunes were at sea; his title to a stipend was gone, and all that he could obtain from the father of Mr. Corbet, was, an agreement, during his continuance at college, to pay for his commons. With no exhibition, or other means of support in the prosecution of his studies, he had nothing to depend on, save the assistance of a kind and indulgent parent. At that time the trade of a country bookfeller, even in a city where was a cathedral and an incorporation of ecclesiastics, was less profitable than it is now; for though it may be said, that during the reign of Queen Anne, multitudes of controversial books and pamphlets were publishing, yet these yielded but small advantage to the mere venders of them: there were then no such publications for the mere amusement of young readers or idle persons as the press now daily sends forth; nor had any bookfeller entertained in his mind the project of a circulating library: from hence it is evident, that his father, having no other means of subsisting himself and his children, than the ordinary income of his shop, was but little able to afford him any other than a scanty maintenance.

The want of that assistance, which scholars in general derive from their parents, relations, and friends, soon became visible in the garb and appearance of Johnson, which, though in some degree concealed by a scholar's gown, and that we know is never deemed the less honourable for being old, was so apparent as to
excite

excite pity in some that saw and noticed him. Shall I be particular, and relate a circumstance of his distress, that cannot be imputed to him as an effect of his own extravagance or irregularity, and consequently reflects no disgrace on his memory? He had scarce any change of raiment, and, in a short time after Corbet left him, but one pair of shoes, and those so old, that his feet were seen through them: a gentleman of his college, the father of an eminent clergyman now living, directed a servitor one morning to place a new pair at the door of Johnson's chamber, who, seeing them upon his first going out, so far forgot himself and the spirit that must have actuated his unknown benefactor, that, with all the indignation of an insulted man, he threw them away.

He may be supposed to have been under the age of twenty, when this imaginary indignity was offered him, a period of life at which, so far as concerns the knowledge of mankind, and the means of improving adverse circumstances, every one has much to learn: he had, doubtless, before this time, experienced 'the proud man's contumely;' and in this school of affliction might have first had reason to say,—

'Slow rises worth by poverty deprest.'

his spirit was, nevertheless, too great to sink under this depression. His tutor, Jordan, in about a year's space, went off to a living which he had been presented to, upon giving a bond to resign it in favour of a minor, and Johnson became the pupil of Mr. Adams, a person of far superior endowments, who afterwards attained a doctor's degree, and is at this time head of his college. Encouraged, by a change so propitious to his studies,

studies, he prosecuted them with diligence, attended both public and private lectures, performed his exercises with alacrity, and in short, neglected no means or opportunities of improvement. He had at this time a great emulation, to call it by no worse a name, to excel his competitors in literature. There was a young gentleman of his college, named Meekes, whose exercises he could not bear to hear commended; and whenever he declaimed or disputed in the hall, Johnson would retire to the farthest corner thereof, that he might be out of the reach of his voice.

In this course of learning, his favourite objects were classical literature, ethics, and theology, in the latter whereof he laid the foundation by studying the Fathers. If we may judge from the magnitude of his *Adversaria*, which I have now by me, his plan for study was a very extensive one. The heads of science, to the extent of six folio volumes, are copiously branched throughout it; but, as is generally the case with young students, the blank far exceed in number the written leaves.

To say the truth, the course of his studies was far from regular: he read by fits and starts, and, in the intervals, digested his reading by meditation, to which he was ever prone. Neither did he regard the hours of study, farther than the discipline of the college compelled him. It was the practice in his time, for a fervitor, by order of the master, to go round to the rooms of the young men, and knocking at the door, to enquire if they were within, and, if no answer was returned, to report them absent: Johnson could not endure this intrusion, and would frequently be silent, when the utterance of a word would have insured him from censure;

sure; and, farther to be revenged for being disturbed when he was as profitably employed as perhaps he could be, would join with others of the young men in the college in hunting, as they called it, the servitor, who was thus diligent in his duty; and this they did with the noise of pots and candlesticks, singing to the tune of Chevy-chace, the words in that old ballad,

‘To drive the deer with hound and horn,’ &c.

not seldom to the endangering the life and limbs of the unfortunate victim.

These, and other such levities, marked his behaviour for a short time after his coming to college; but he soon convinced those about him, that he came thither for other purposes than to make sport either for himself or them. His exercises were applauded, and his tutor was not so shallow a man, but that he could discover in Johnson great skill in the classics, and also a talent for Latin versification, by such compositions as few of his standing could equal. Mr. Jordan taking advantage, therefore, of a transgression of this his pupil, the absenting himself from early prayers, imposed on him for a vacation exercise, the task of translating into Latin verse the Messiah of Mr. Pope, which being shewn to the author of the original, by a son of Dr. Arbuthnot, then a gentleman-commoner of Christ-church, and brother of the late Mr. Arbuthnot of the Exchequer-office, was read, and returned with this encomium: ‘The writer of this poem will leave it a question for posterity, whether his or mine be the original.’* This translation

* Mr. Pope, in another instance, gave a proof of his candor and disposition to encourage the essays of young men of genius. When Smart published his Latin translation of Mr. Pope’s ode on St. Cecilia’s

translation found its way into a miscellany published by subscription at Oxford, in the year 1731, under the name of J. Husbands.

He had but little relish for mathematical learning, and was content with such a degree of knowledge in physics, as he could not but acquire in the ordinary exercises of the place: his fortunes and circumstances had determined him to no particular course of study, and were such as seemed to exclude him from every one of the learned professions. He, more than once, signified to a friend who had been educated at the same school with him, then at Christchurch, and intended for the bar, an inclination to the practice of the civil or the common law; the former of these required a long course of academical institution, and how to succeed in the latter, he had not learned;* but his father's inability to support him checked

lia's day, Mr. Pope having read it, in a letter to Newbery the publisher of it returned his thanks to the author, with an assurance, that it exceeded his own original. This fact Newbery himself told me, and offered to shew me the letter in Mr. Pope's hand-writing.

* In the two professions of the civil and common law, a notable difference is discernible: the former admits such only as have had the previous qualification of an university education; the latter receives all whose broken fortunes drive, or a confidence in their abilities tempts to seek a maintenance in it. Men of low extraction, domestic servants, and clerks to eminent lawyers, have become special pleaders and advocates; and, by an unrestrained abuse of the liberty of speech, have acquired popularity and wealth. A remarkable instance of this kind occurs in the account of a famous lawyer of the last century, lord chief justice Saunders, as exhibited in the life of the lord keeper Guilford, Page 223.

‘ He was at first no better than a poor beggar boy, if not a parish foundling, without known parents or relations. He had found
‘ a way

checked these wishes, and left him to seek the means of a future subsistence. If nature could be said to have pointed out a profession for him, that of the bar seems to have been it: in that faculty, his acuteness and penetration, and above all, his nervous and manly elocution, could scarcely have failed to distinguish him, and to have raised him to the highest honours of that lucrative profession; but, whatever nature might have intended for him, fortune seems to have been the arbiter of his destiny, and by shutting up the avenues to wealth and civil honours, to have left him to display his talents in the several characters of a moralist, a philosopher, and a poet.

The time of his continuance at Oxford is divisible into two periods, the former whereof commenced on the 31st day of October, 1728, and determined in Decem-

‘ a way to live by obsequiousness, (in *Clement’s-Inn*, as I remember,)
 ‘ and courting the attornies clerks for scraps. The extraordinary
 ‘ observance and diligence of the boy, made the society willing to
 ‘ do him good. He appeared very ambitious to learn to write;
 ‘ and one of the attornies got a board knocked up at a window on
 ‘ the top of a staircase, and that was his desk, where he sat and
 ‘ wrote after copies of court and other hands the clerks gave him.
 ‘ He made himself so expert a writer, that he took in business, and
 ‘ earned some pence by hackney-writing. And thus, by degrees,
 ‘ he pushed his faculties, and fell to forms; and, by books that
 ‘ were lent him, became an exquisite entering-clerk: and, by the
 ‘ same course of improvement of himself, an able counsel, first in
 ‘ special pleading, then at large. And, after he was called to the
 ‘ bar, had practice in the *King’s Bench* court equal with any
 ‘ there.’

He succeeded Pemberton in the office of chief justice of the king’s bench, and died of an apoplexy and palsy a short time before the revolution. A curious delineation of his person and character may be seen in the volume above cited.

ber, 1729, when, as appears by a note in his diary in these words, '1729 Dec. S. J. Oxonio rediit,' he left that place, the reason whereof, was a failure of pecuniary supplies from his father; but meeting with another source, the bounty, as it is supposed, of some one or more of the members of the cathedral, he returned, and made up the whole of his residence in the university, about three years, during all which time his academical studies, though not orderly, were to an astonishing degree intense. Whoever has perused Mr. Spence's life of Antonio Magliabechi, may discern a near resemblance in their manner of reading, between that person and Johnson: the former, says his author, 'seems never to have applied himself to any particular study. A passion for reading was his ruling passion, and a prodigious memory his great talent: he read every book almost indifferently, as they happened to come into his hands: he read them with a surprising quickness, and yet retained, not only the sense of what he read, but, often, all the words and the very manner of spelling them, if there was any thing peculiar of that kind in any author.'

A like propensity to reading, and an equal celerity in the practice thereof, were observable in Johnson: it was wonderful to see, when he took up a book, with what eagerness he perused, and with what haste his eye, for it has been related, that he had the use of only one, travelled over it: he has been known to read a volume, and that not a small one, at a sitting; nor was he inferior in the power of memory to him with whom he is compared: whatever he read, became his own for ever, with all the advantages that a penetrating judgment and deep reflection could add to it. I have

have heard him repeat, with scarce a mistake of a word, passages from favourite authors, of three or four octavo pages in length. One instance of the greatness of his retentive faculty himself has thought fit to give, in his life of the Earl of Rochester, where may be seen a Latin poem upon Nothing, written by Passerat; for the insertion whereof he had, as it is said, no other aid than his own recollection. How far he approved that method of reading, which he is above said to have pursued, and what value he set on the powers of memory, may be inferred from his character of the former of those persons in his lives of the poets, of whom he thus speaks :

‘ He was remarkable for the power of reading
 ‘ with great rapidity, and of retaining with great
 ‘ fidelity what he so easily collected. He, therefore,
 ‘ always knew what the present question required;
 ‘ and when his friends expressed their wonder at his
 ‘ acquisitions, made in a state of apparent negligence
 ‘ and drunkenness, he never discovered his hours of
 ‘ reading or method of study, but involved himself in
 ‘ affected silence, and fed his own vanity with their
 ‘ admiration and conjectures.’

It is little less than certain, that his own indigence, and the inability of his father to help him, called Johnson from the university sooner than he meant to quit it : his father, either during his continuance there, or possibly before, had been by misfortunes rendered insolvent, if not, as Johnson told me, an actual bankrupt. The non-attainment of a degree, which after a certain standing is conferred almost of course, he regretted not : it is true, he soon felt the want of one ; but ample amends were afterwards made him, by

the voluntary grant of the highest academical honours that two of the most learned seminaries in Europe could bestow.

The advantages he derived from an university education, small as they may hitherto seem, went a great way towards fixing, as well his moral as his literary character: the order and discipline of a college life, the reading the best authors, the attendance on public exercises, the early calls to prayer, the frequent instructions from the pulpit, with all the other means of religious and moral improvement, had their proper effect; and though they left his natural temper much as they found it, they begat in his mind those sentiments of piety which were the rule of his conduct throughout his future life, and made so conspicuous a part of his character.

He could not, at this early period of his life, divest himself of an opinion, that poverty was disgraceful; and was very severe in his censures of that œconomy in both our universities, which exacted at meals the attendance of poor scholars, under the several denominations of servitors in the one, and fizers in the other: he thought that the scholar's, like the christian life, levelled all distinctions of rank and worldly pre-eminence; but in this he was mistaken: civil policy had, long before his coming into the world, reduced the several classes of men to a regular subordination, and given servitude its sanction. The feudal system of government throughout Europe had so arranged the several orders of subjects, that the lower were uniformly dependent on the higher; and in the history of the peerage of our own country, we find the retinues of the higher nobility made up of the sons and daughters

ters of those of the lower: Wolfey had in his train, earls, barons, and knights; and the founder of the present Cavendish family was his gentleman-usher, at a salary of ten pounds a year: and, to justify the practice of personal servitude at meals, we have an example of a child waiting on his parents while at dinner, in the *Pietas Puerilis*, among the colloquies of Erasmus*.

Upon his leaving the university, he went home to the house of his father, which he found so nearly filled with relations, that is to say, the maiden sisters of his mother and uncle Cornelius Ford, whom his father, on the decease of their brother in the summer of 1731, had taken in to board, that it would scarce receive him.

He brought with him a deep sense of religion, a due reverence for the national church, and a respect for its ministers; and these he retained, though he had been a witness to the profligacy of his uncle Ford, which was nearly enough to have effaced all such impressions from a young mind. Having not then seen, as we now do, ecclesiastical benefices advertised for sale, and considered by the purchasers as lay-fees; nor beheld many of the beneficed clergy abandoning the duties of the clerical function to the lowest of their order, themselves becoming gentlemen at large, mixing in all public recreations and amusements †, neglecting their studies

* *Adornatâ parentibus mensâ, recito consecrationem: deinde prandentibus ministro, donec jubeor et ipse prandium sumere.*

† While this is the case, there can be very little hope of mending the situation of the inferior clergy. An increase of income would raise them to a condition of employing substitutes whom mere necessity would compel to the performance of their duty, and these would have the same reason to complain as those who at present are the objects of our compassion. In a word, were the gradations of the clergy to be multiplied, the most essential offices of their function would continue, as they now are, to be the employment of the lowest of them.

for cards, preaching the sermons of others, and affecting, in many particulars of their dress, the garb of the laity, in disobedience to the canon which enjoins decency of apparel to ministers *: I say, not having been a witness to these late refinements in manners, he, notwithstanding the ferocity of his temper, revered the clergy as a body of men, who have been the greatest improvers of learning, and to whom mankind have the highest obligations; but lamented that the race was nearly extinct.

As Johnson's stay at the university was not long enough for him to complete his studies, it is natural to suppose, that at his return to Lichfield, he devoted his time to the improvement of them, and that having no call from thence, he continued there till the death of his father, which, as he has noted it, was in the month of December, 1731.

Being thus bereft of the little support his father was able to afford him, and having, not only a profession, but the means of subsistence to seek, he, in the month of March 1732, accepted of an invitation to the office of under-master or usher of a free grammar-school, at Market-Bosworth in Leicestershire, founded and endowed by Sir Wolstan Dixie, lord mayor of London in 1586, the upper master whereof was the reverend Anthony Blackwall, the author of a well-known book on the sacred classics. The patron of this seminary was Sir Wolstan Dixie, baronet, a descendant of the original founder; and the endowment being very small, Johnson's residence was in the mansion-house of Sir Wolstan adjacent thereto; but the treatment he received from this person, who, in the pride of wealth, shewed no regard for learning or parts, nor respected

* The 74th, of 1603.

any man for his mental endowments, was such that, preferring the chance of the wide world to his patronage, Johnson, in the month of July, in the same year in which he went to Bosworth, resigned his office, and took leave of a place, which he could never after speak of but in terms of the utmost dislike, and even of abhorrence.

By the middle of June, in the year 1732, he was able to estimate that slender pittance which devolved to him upon the decease of his father; the amount whereof I find ascertained by a memorandum in his diary, which, as it is descriptive of his circumstances at the time, I here translate, and at the bottom of the page have inserted verbatim.

1732, June 15, I laid by eleven guineas; on which day I received all of my father's effects which I can hope for till the death of my mother, (which I pray may be late), that is to say, twenty pounds; so that I have my fortune to make, and care must be taken, that in the mean time, the powers of my mind may not grow languid through poverty, nor want drive me into wickedness*.

In the month of June in the following year, 1733, I find him resident in the house of a person named Jarvis, at Birmingham, where, as he has noted in his diary, he rendered into English from the French, a voyage to Abyffinia, which has since appeared to be that of Padre Jerome Lobo, a Portuguese Jesuit, with

* '1732, Junii 15, Undecim aureos deposui, quo die quicquid
' ante matris funus, (quod ferum sit precor), de paternis bonis
' sperare licet, viginti scilicet libras, accepi. Usque adeo mihi mea
' fortuna fingenda est interea, ne paupertate vires animi languescant, ne in flagitia egestas adigat, cavendum.

the additions of Mons. l'Abbé Le Grand, very curious and entertaining, of which the following is a character :

It contains a narration of the endeavours of a company of missionaries of the author's country to unite the Abyssins to the church of Rome. It was translated from the original Portuguese into French by l'Abbé Le Grand, who, as Lobo had extended it no farther than his own concern in the mission, continued it down to the time when the Jesuits were finally driven out of Æthiopia, with the addition of fifteen dissertations on subjects relating to the history, antiquities, government, religion, manners, and natural history of Abyssinia, and other countries mentioned by the original author.

The preface, which bears stronger marks of Johnson's hand than any part of the work, is calculated to attract attention and credit: it commends the unaffected simplicity of the original narrative, and the learning of M. Le Grand; it acknowledges the omissions and deviations which the translator thought it prudent to make, and it apologizes for any defects that may be discovered. Johnson's disquisitive propensity just dawns in an observation on the erroneous method of the Roman church, in making converts; but there is nothing striking in the composition.

Were we to rest our judgment on internal evidence, Johnson's claim to the title of translator of this work would be disputable; it has scarce a feature resembling him: the language is as simple and unornamented as John Bunyan's; the style is far from elegant, and sometimes it is not even correct. These circumstances, together with frequent mistakes and various orthography, would almost stagger our belief, but

that we have the authority of Johnson himself to rely on, who often acknowledged it for his own.

As this voyage to Abyssinia, notwithstanding the country and manners it describes are wonderful and interesting, has not been so much noticed as Johnson's later and original productions, it may not be thought impertinent to give the outline of the relation.

About the beginning of the seventeenth century, the then reigning emperor of Abyssinia, for considerations that favoured more of good policy than of religion, became a convert to the church of Rome: many of his subjects had followed his example; and the missionaries already in the country were in want of co-adjutors to extend their progress. Padre Jerome Lobo, who was then employed in the East-Indian mission at Goa, was one deputed to this enterprize, which, at length, proved too much for Romish zeal and Jesuitical dexterity.

With much difficulty he and his companions reached and got footing in the empire, where they had to endure a climate rendered by excessive heats and rains pestiferous, and to engage in perilous journies across deserts infested by banditti, in perpetual fear of them and of wild beasts, the tokens of whose depredations marked their way. When they arrived at the habitations of the people, their dangers were changed, but not diminished; sometimes they could not obtain provisions, and at others, were confined to their houses by the dread of assassination. Those who were to be their disciples, professed, it is true, a superstitious religion, in some parts Judaical, in many others resembling that of the church of Rome; but it had had little effect on their minds: moral virtues they had

scarcely any; in social affections they were miserably deficient, and their approaches to civilization and elegance were on a level with those of their southern neighbours at the Cape of Good Hope.

But labour and patience produced in time, a hope that the mission would not be fruitless: the number of their profelytes was, at one period, so great, that the corporal strength of the fathers was exhausted in the exhortations previous to baptism. ‘We erected
 ‘our tent,’ says Lobo, ‘and placed our altar under
 ‘some great trees, for the benefit of the shade; and
 ‘every day before sun-rising, my companion and I
 ‘began to catechise and instruct these new catholics,
 ‘and used our utmost endeavours to make them
 ‘abjure their errors. When we were weary with
 ‘speaking, we placed in ranks those who were sufficiently instructed, and passing through them with
 ‘great vessels of water, baptized them according to
 ‘the form prescribed by the church. As their number was very great, we cried aloud—*those of this
 ‘rank are named Anthony—those of that rank Peter;—*
 ‘and did the same among the women, whom we separated from among the men. We then confessed
 ‘them, and admitted them to the communion. After
 ‘mass we applied ourselves again to catechise, to instruct, and receive the renunciation of their errors,
 ‘scarce allowing ourselves time to make a scanty meal,
 ‘which we never did more than once a day.’

Zeal equal to this, and rising in proportion to the opposition it met with, did these pious fathers exercise during nine years that they remained in Abyssinia. Their success was various and fluctuating; sometimes it gave them ground to hope that all would be converted,

verted, and sometimes their patrons and profelytes became their most inveterate persecutors: their hardships were increased by civil commotions, and all their expectations were clouded by the death of the Emperor, whose successor was a bigot in the religion of the country. They then put themselves under the protection of a prince, who had emancipated himself from the power of Abyssinia, and thought, that as he had afforded them succour, they should be safe in his dominions; but they were soon convinced of their error, by receiving orders to prepare to serve, or in other words become slaves to the Turks:---‘a message,’ says Lobo, ‘which filled us with surprise; it having never been known that one of these lords had ever abandoned any whom he had taken under his protection; and it is, on the contrary, one of the highest points of honour amongst them, to risque their lives and their fortunes in the defence of their dependents who have implored their protection: but neither law nor justice were of any advantage to us, and the customs of the country were doomed to be broken when they would have contributed to our security.’

From M. Le Grand’s information it appears, that the conduct of these missionaries in Abyssinia had been such as tended rather to exasperate than conciliate: they considered themselves, not only figuratively, as the generals of Christ’s church militant, and propagated their faith by measures that rendered them and their doctrine odious. The peace of the country and their residence in it were become incompatible: they were accordingly delivered into the hands of the Turks; and experienced, from a little troop sent to convoy them, greater humanity than the Abyssins had shewn

shewn them : at Suaquem, an island in the Red Sea, terms of ransom were proposed to them, which, though exorbitant, they were forced to accept ; and, after surmounting many obstacles and perils, that part of the mission with which Lobo was engaged, returned to Goa.

The revenge, which it was reported in Abyssinia, the court of Portugal meditated, rendered a people naturally inhuman, ferocious : the remaining missionaries experienced still harder fate than Lobo and his companions ; many were put to death, and the whole fraternity so completely extirpated, that, after many efforts, all attempts to make a catholic people of the Abyssins were abandoned, as chimerical and impracticable.

The dissertations at the end of this work, and which Johnson seems to estimate highly, contain variety of information and controversial learning, particularly respecting the difference between the church that sent the mission, and that which received it, and point out very clearly the inutility of endeavours founded on the principles of the Jesuits.

Having completed this translation, which I conjecture he was paid for by some bookseller of Birmingham, who published it in an octavo volume, Johnson, in February 1733-4, left that place, and returned to Lichfield, from whence, in the month of August following, he issued a proposal, soliciting a subscription to an edition of Politian's Poems *, with this title, ' Angeli Politiani Poemata Latina, quibus notas, cum

* The proposal notifies, that subscriptions would be taken in by N. [Nathanael] Johnson, who had succeeded to his father's business.

‘ *Historia Latinæ Poeseos a Petrarchæ ævo ad Politiani tempora deducta, et Vita Politiani fusius quam antehac enarrata, addidit Sam. Johnson.*’ The book was to be contained and printed in thirty octavo sheets, and delivered at the price of five shillings; but not meeting with sufficient encouragement, Johnson dropped the design.

From the above particulars it evidently appears, that he had entertained a resolution to depend for a livelihood upon what he should be able, either in the way of original composition, or translation, or in editing the works of celebrated authors, to procure by his studies, and, in short, to become an author by profession; an occupation, which, though it may, in some views of it, be deemed mercenary, as adapting itself to particular occasions and conjunctures, nay, to the interests, passions and prejudices, and even humours of mankind, has yet some illustrious examples, at least in our times, to justify it. It is true, that many persons distinguish between those writings which are the effect of a natural impulse of genius, and those other that owe their existence to interested motives, and, being the offspring of another parent, may, in some sense, be said to be illegitimate; but, Johnson knew of no such distinction, and would never acquiesce in it when made by others: on the contrary, I have, more than once, heard him assert, that he knew of no genuine motive for writing, other than necessity.

In the prosecution of this his design, he, in the year, 1734, made a tender of assistance to Cave, the editor, printer, and publisher of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*; a man of whom I shall hereafter have

frequent occasion to speak. The letter of Johnson to Cave, on this occasion, is yet extant, and is here given as a literary curiosity :

‘ SIR, Nov. 25, 1734.

‘ As you appear no less sensible than your readers, of the defect of your poetical article, you will not be displeased, if, in order to the improvement of it, I communicate to you the sentiments of a person, who will undertake, on reasonable terms, sometimes to fill a column.

‘ His opinion is, that the public would not give you a bad reception, if, beside the current wit of the month, which a critical examination would generally reduce to a narrow compass, you admitted, not only poems, inscriptions, &c. never printed before, which he will sometimes supply you with, but likewise short literary dissertations in Latin or English, critical remarks on authors ancient or modern, forgotten poems that deserve revival, or loose pieces, like Floyer’s, worth preserving. By this method, your Literary Article, for so it might be called, will, he thinks, be better recommended to the public, than by low jests, aukward buffoonery, or the dull scurrilities of either party.

‘ If such a correspondence will be agreeable to you, be pleased to inform me, in two posts, what the conditions are on which you shall expect it. Your late offer* gives me no reason to distrust your generosity. If you engage in any literary projects besides this

* A prize of fifty pounds for the best poem ‘ on Life, Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell.’

‘ paper, I have other designs to impart, if I could be
 ‘ secure from having others reap the advantage of
 ‘ what I should hint.

‘ Your letter, by being directed to S. Smith, to be
 ‘ left at the Castle in Birmingham, Warwickshire, will
 ‘ reach

‘ Your humble servant.’ *

To this letter Cave returned an answer, dated 2d December following, wherein he accepted the services of Johnson, and retained him as a correspondent and a contributor to his Magazine.

This correspondence exhibits a view of the Gentleman’s Magazine in its rudiments, and may excite a curiosity in the patrons thereof, to trace back to its origin the publication of a miscellany, the fame whereof has extended itself to the most remote parts of the literary world. Histories of the learned men of modern times, and short abridgments of their works, as also such pieces as for their brevity required some vehicle to convey them to posterity, it has been the practice of foreign countries, in their memoirs, and of universities and academies, in their acts and transactions, to give. The historical and memorable diurnal events of the passing times, have also been recorded in publications variously denominated, particularly, in a work, entitled the Political State of Great Britain, beginning with the year 1711, and compiled by the well known Abel Boyer. In this are contained debates and speeches in parliament; and also, abstracts of po-

* This letter, and Cave’s answer to it, may serve to refute an assertion in an anonymous account of Johnson’s life, that he was introduced to the acquaintance of Cave by Savage.

litical pamphlets ; but of a work that should comprehend intelligence of both these kinds, we know of no exemplar in this country, earlier than the year 1716, when an essay towards such a one was made in the publication of a book, entitled *The Historical Register*, containing, an impartial relation of all transactions foreign and domestic, by a body of men, from whom few would have expected any thing of the kind. In short, the editors of the *Historical Register*, were the members of a society, associated about the year above-mentioned, for the purpose of insurance from fire, which, from the badge assumed by them, obtained the denomination of the *Sun-fire-Office*, and is still subsisting in a flourishing state. One of the managing persons in this society, was, if my information misleads me not, a man of the name of Povey, who, by the way, was a great improver of that useful project, the *Penny Post*,* and died within my memory. Having a scheming head, a plausible tongue, and a ready pen, he prevailed on his fellow-members to undertake the above publication, foreign as it was to the nature of their institution. In *Strype's continuation of Stow's Survey*, I find the following article respecting this society : ‘ All persons taking out policies for insurance, must pay two shillings and six-pence per quarter ; and, besides their insurance, shall have a book, called the *Historical Register*, left every quarter at their house.’

The *Historical Register* gave also an account of the proceedings of Parliament : the first volume contains

* The original inventor thereof was one Mr. Dockwra, a citizen of such eminence, that he stood for the office of Chamberlain, against Sir Wm. Fazakerley.

the speeches in both houses, on the debate on the Septennial Bill; but, so great is the caution observed in drawing them up, that none of those in the House of Lords are appropriated, otherwise, than by such words as these: 'A noble Duke stood up, and said,' 'This speech was answered by a Northern Peer,' and other such vague designations. In those in the House of Commons, the names of the speakers, Mr. Shippen, Mr. Hampden, Sir Richard Steele, and others are given, without any artifices of concealment.

This publication was continued to the year 1737, inclusive, and may be supposed to have been superseded by the Gentleman's Magazine, which was then rising very fast in its reputation.

From the Historical Register the hint was taken, of a publication, entitled *The Grub-street Journal*,* which, besides a brief account of public occurrences, contained criticisms and censures of dull and profane

* Mention is often made, in the *Dunciad* and other modern books, of Grub-street writers and Grub-street publications, but the terms are little understood: the following historical fact will explain them: During the usurpation, a prodigious number of seditious and libellous pamphlets and papers, tending to exasperate the people, and encrease the confusion in which the nation was involved, were from time to time published. The authors of these were, for the most part, men whose indigent circumstances compelled them to live in the suburbs and most obscure parts of the town; Grub-street then abounded with mean and old houses, which were let out in lodgings, at low rents, to persons of this description, whose occupation was the publishing anonymous treason and slander. One of the original inhabitants of this street was Fox the Martyrologist, who, during his abode there, wrote his *Acts and Monuments*. It was also rendered famous by having been the dwelling-place of Mr. Henry Welby, a gentleman of whom it is related in a printed narrative that he lived there forty years without being seen of any.

or

or immoral books and pamphlets, as also, original essays and letters to the editors. The chief conductors of it, were, Dr. John Martyn, then a young physician, afterwards professor of botany in the university of Cambridge, and Dr. Ruffel, also a physician; the former assumed the name Bavius, and the latter Mævius. Its first publication was in January, 1730, and it meeting with encouragement, Cave projected an improvement thereon in a pamphlet of his own, and in the following year gave to the world the first number of the Gentleman's Magazine, with a notification that the same would be continued monthly, incurring thereby a charge of plagiarism, which, as he is said to have confessed it, we may suppose he did not look upon as criminal *.

Johnson had not by his letter, herein before inserted, so attached himself to Cave, as not to be at liberty to enter into a closer engagement with any other person: he, therefore, in 1736, made overtures to the Rev. Mr. Budworth, then master of the grammar school at Brerewood, in Staffordshire, and who had been bred under Mr. Blackwall, at Market Bosworth, to become his assistant; but Mr. Budworth thought himself under a necessity of declining them, from an apprehension that those convulsive motions to which Johnson through life was subject, might render him an object of imitation, and possibly of ridicule, with his pupils.

It may be remembered that in a preceding page, Johnson is said to have resided for some months, in the year 1734, in the house of a person named

* Memoirs of the society of Grub-street. Preface, page xii. et seqq.

Jarvis, at Birmingham. To this circumstance, by a conjecture not improbable, may be referred an important event of his life. At that time there dwelt at Birmingham a widow, the relict of Mr. Porter a mercer, who dying, left her, if not well jointured, so provided for, as made a match with her to a man in Johnson's circumstances desirable: report says, she was rather advanced in years; it is certain that she had a son and daughter grown up; the former was in the last war a captain in the navy, and his sister, lately dead, inherited from him a handsome fortune, acquired in the course of a long service. Of her personal charms little can now be remembered: Johnson has celebrated them in an inscription on her tomb at Bromley; but, considering his infirmity, and admitting the truth of a confession, said to have been made by him, that he never saw 'the human face divine,' it may be questioned, whether himself was ever an eye-witness to them. The inscription further declares her to have been of the family of Jarvis, and gives colour to a supposition that she was either a sister or other relation of the Jarvis above-mentioned.

With this person he married, his age being then about twenty-seven. Her fortune, which is conjectured to have been about eight hundred pounds, placed him in a state of affluence, to which before he had been a stranger. He was not so imprudent as to think it an inexhaustible mine; on the contrary, he reflected on the means of improving it. His acquisitions at school and at the university, and the improvement he had made of his talents in the study of the French and Italian languages, qualified him, in an eminent degree, for an instructor of youth in classical litera-

ture; and the reputation of his father, and the connections he had formed in and about Lichfield, pointed out to him a fair prospect of succeeding in that useful profession.

There dwelt in the above-mentioned city, a very respectable gentleman, Mr. Gilbert Walmley, register of the ecclesiastical court of the bishop thereof, to whose house, in his school and also in his university vacations, Johnson was a welcome guest: the same person was also a friend of captain Garrick, who had for some time been resident at Lichfield, and, by consequence, of Mr. David Garrick, his son. His character is so well pourtrayed by Johnson, and represents in such lively colours his friendship for him, that it would be injustice to omit the insertion of it, as given in the life of Edmund Smith:—

‘ Of Gilbert Walmley, thus presented to my mind,
 ‘ let me indulge myself in the remembrance. I knew
 ‘ him very early; he was one of the first friends that
 ‘ literature procured me; and, I hope that, at least,
 ‘ my gratitude made me worthy of his notice.

‘ He was of an advanced age, and I was only not
 ‘ a boy; yet, he never received my notions with con-
 ‘ tempt. He was a whig, with all the virulence and
 ‘ malevolence of his party; yet difference of opinion
 ‘ did not keep us apart: I honoured him, and he en-
 ‘ dured me.

‘ He had mingled with the gay world, without
 ‘ exemption from its vices or its follies, but had ne-
 ‘ ver neglected the cultivation of his mind; his belief
 ‘ of revelation was unshaken; his learning preserved
 ‘ his principles; he grew first regular, and then
 ‘ pious.

‘ His

His studies had been so various, that I am not able to name a man of equal knowledge. His acquaintance with books was great, and what he did not immediately know, he could at least tell where to find. Such was his amplitude of learning, and such his copiousness of communication, that it may be doubted whether a day now passes, in which I have not some advantage from his friendship.

At this man's table I enjoyed many chearful and instructive hours, with companions, such as are not often found ; with one who has lengthened, and one who has gladdened life ; with Dr. James, whose skill in physic will be long remembered ; and with David Garrick, whom I hoped to have gratified with this character of our common friend : but what are the hopes of man ! I am disappointed by that stroke of death, which has eclipsed the gaiety of nations, and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasure.

The benevolent person, so gratefully remembered in the above encomium, knowing the abilities of Johnson, encouraged him in his design of becoming a teacher of literature : he suggested to him the taking a large house, situate in a place adjacent to Lichfield ; which, however the name of it be spelt, the common people call Edjal : thither Johnson went, and with him young Garrick, who, though he had been educated in Lichfield school, and was then near eighteen years old, having been diverted in the course of his studies by a call to Lisbon, stood in need of improvement in the Latin and French languages.

The placing Garrick under the tuition of Johnson, was an act of Mr. Walmsley's, and resembles that

politic device of country house-wives, the placing one egg in the nest of a hen to induce her to lay more : it succeeded so far, as to draw from the families of the neighbouring gentry a few pupils, and among the rest, a son of Mr. Offley, of Staffordshire ; a name, that for centuries past, may be traced in the history and records of that county. But, so adverse were his fortunes in this early period, that this well-planned scheme of a settlement disappointed the hopes of Johnson and his friends ; for, neither his own abilities, nor the patronage of Mr. Walmesley, nor the exertions of Mrs. Johnson and her relations, succeeded farther than to produce an accession of about five or six pupils ; so that his number, at no time, exceeded eight, and of those not all were boarders.

After waiting a reasonable time in hopes of more pupils, Johnson, finding they came in but slowly, had recourse to the usual method of raising a school. In the year, 1736, he advertised the instructing young gentlemen in the Greek and Latin languages, by himself, at his house, describing it near Lichfield.* That this notification failed of its end, we can scarce wonder, if we reflect, that he was little more than twenty-seven years of age when he published it, and that he had not the vanity to profess teaching all sciences, nor the effrontery of those, who, in these more modern times, undertake, in private boarding-schools to qualify young men for holy orders.

* The following is the advertisement which he published upon the occasion :--- ‘ At Edial, near Lichfield, in Staffordshire, young gentlemen are boarded, and taught the Latin and Greek languages by SAMUEL JOHNSON.’ Vide Gent. Mag. for 1736, Page 418.

By means of a paper which I have now before me, I am able to furnish, what I take to have been his method or plan of institution; and, as it may be deemed a curiosity, and may serve the purpose of future instructors of youth, I here insert it:

When the introduction or formation of nouns and verbs is perfectly mastered, the pupils learn

Corderius, by Mr. Clarke; beginning at the same time to translate out of his introduction. They then proceed to

Erasmus, reading him with Clarke's translation. These books form the first class.

Class II. Read Eutropius and Cornelius Nepos, or Justin with the translation. The first class to repeat by memory, in the morning, the rules they had learned before; and, in the afternoon, the Latin rules of the nouns and verbs. They are also, on Thursdays and Saturdays to be examined in the rules they have learned.

The second class does the same while in Eutropius; afterwards, they are to get and repeat the irregular nouns and verbs; and also, the rules for making and scanning verses, in which they are to be examined as the first class.

Class III. Read Ovid's Metamorphoses in the morning, and Cæsar's Commentaries in the afternoon. Continue the Latin rules till they are perfect in them. Proceed then to Leeds's Greek Grammar, and are examined as before.

They then proceed to Virgil, beginning at the same time to compose themes and verses,* and learn Greek, and from thence pass on to Horace, Terence, and Sallust. The Greek authors afterwards read are, first, those in the Attic dialect, which are Cebes, Ælian, Lucian by Leeds, and Xenophon: next Homer in the Ionic, Theocritus Doric, Euripides Attic and Doric.

From two letters, first inserted in the Gentleman's Magazine, and since in sundry other publications, from Mr. Walmsley to his friend the reverend Mr. Colson, a mathematician, and, in his later years, Lucasian professor at Cambridge, little is to be learnt respecting the history of Johnson and Garrick, at this period: the one wants the date of the month, the other that of the year; and though, in the order of their publication, the one immediately follows the other, there must have been some interval between the times of writing the first and the last. The first is dated in 1737, and, as it contains a recommendation of Garrick to Mr. Colson, for instruction in mathematics, philosophy, and human learning, leads us to suppose, that before the time of writing it, Johnson's scheme of taking in boarders had proved abortive. The latter, written in what year we know not, and inserted below, recommends both Johnson and Garrick to his notice, the former as a good scholar and one that gave hopes

* Johnson had through his life a propensity to Latin composition: he shewed it very early at school, and while there made some Latin verses, for which the Earl of Berkshire, who was a good scholar, and had always a Horace in his pocket, gave him a guinea.

of turning out a fine tragedy-writer; and, we are from good authority assured, that in March, in the year last above-mentioned, they, on horse-back, arrived in town together.

‘ Dear Sir,

Lichfield, March 2.

‘ I had the favour of yours, and am extremely
 ‘ obliged to you; but cannot say, I had a greater
 ‘ affection for you upon it, than I had before, being
 ‘ long since so much endeared to you, as well by an
 ‘ early friendship, as by your many excellent and va-
 ‘ luable qualifications. And, had I a son of my own,
 ‘ it would be my ambition, instead of sending him to
 ‘ the university, to dispose of him as this young gen-
 ‘ tleman is.

‘ He and another neighbour of mine, one Mr. S.
 ‘ Johnson, set out this morning for London together.
 ‘ Davy Garrick is to be with you early the next
 ‘ week, and Mr. Johnson to try his fate with a tra-
 ‘ gedy, and to see to get himself employed in some
 ‘ translation either from the Latin or the French.
 ‘ Johnson is a very good scholar and a poet, and, I
 ‘ have great hopes, will turn out a fine tragedy-
 ‘ writer. If it should any ways lay in your way,
 ‘ doubt not but you would be ready to recommend
 ‘ and assist your countryman.

G. WALMSLEY.’

The hope suggested in this letter is grounded on a circumstance which will lead us back to about the year before he quitted his school at Edial. It must be imagined, the instruction of so small a number of scholars as were under his care, left him at leisure to pursue his

private studies and amusements, which, for the most part, consisted in desultory reading. Let it not excite wonder in any that shall peruse these memoirs, to be told, that Burton on Melancholy was a book that he frequently resorted to for the purpose of exhilaration, or that, at times, he should find entertainment in turning over Knolles's voluminous and neglected history of the Turks. In the many hours of leisure which he may be said rather to have endured than enjoyed, we must suppose some employed in the contemplation of his fortunes, the means of improving them, and of resisting the adverse accidents to which human life is exposed, and of which he had already had some experience. The stage holds forth temptations to men of genius, which many have been glad to embrace: the profits arising from a tragedy, including the representation and printing of it, and the connections it sometimes enables the author to form, were in Johnson's idea inestimable; and, it is not impossible, but that Garrick, who, before this time, had manifested a propensity towards the stage, had suggested to him the thought of writing one: certain it is, that during his residence at Edial, and under the eye [of his friend Mr. Walmfley, he planned and completed that poem which gave this gentleman occasion to say, he was likely to become a fine tragedy-writer.

He chose for his story an action related by Knolles in his history above-mentioned with all the powers of the most affecting eloquence: to give it at large would be to transgress the limits I have prescribed myself, and to abridge it would injure it: I will do neither; but referring the reader to the historian himself, will relate it as a bare historical fact.

Mahomet

Mahomet the Great, first emperor of the Turks, in the year 1453 laid siege to the city of Constantinople, then possessed by the Greeks, and, after an obstinate resistance, took and sacked it. Among the many young women whom his commanders thought fit to lay hands on and present to him, was one, named Irene, a Greek, of incomparable beauty and such rare perfection of body and mind, that the emperor becoming enamoured of her, neglected the care of his government and empire for two whole years, and thereby so exasperated the Janizaries and other of his warlike subjects, that they mutinied, and threatened to dethrone him. To prevent this mischief, Mustapha Bassa, a person of great credit with him, undertook to represent to him the great danger to which he lay exposed by the indulgence of his passion: he called to his remembrance the characters, actions, and achievements of many of his predecessors, and the state of his government; and, in short, so roused him from his lethargy, that he took a horrible resolution to silence the clamours of his people, by the sacrifice of this admirable creature: accordingly, on a future day, he commanded her to be dressed and adorned in the richest manner that she and her attendants could devise, and against a certain hour issued orders for the nobility and leaders of his army to attend him in the great hall of his palace. When they were all assembled, himself appeared with great pomp and magnificence, leading his late captive, but now absolute mistress, by the hand, unconscious of guilt and ignorant of his design. With a furious and menacing look, he gave the beholders to understand, that he knew the cause of their discontent, and that he meant

to

to remove it; but bade them first view that lady, whom he still held with his left hand, and say whether any of them being possessed of a jewel so rare and precious, a woman so lovely and fair, would for any cause forego her; to which they answered, that he had great reason for his affection towards her.

To this the emperor replied, that this being their opinion, he would convince them that his actions were in his own power, and that he was yet master of himself. ‘ And having so said,’ says my author, ‘ presently with one of his hands catching the fair Greek by the hair of the head, and drawing his falchion with the other, he, at one blow, struck off her head, to the great terror of them all; and having so done, said unto them, “ Now by this, judge whether your emperor is able to bridle his affections or not.” *’

It no where appears that, in this journey to London, Mrs. Johnson was one of the company; it is rather to be conjectured, that her husband, having abandoned the hope of succeeding in his attempt to raise a school, left to her the care of the house, and the management of the small part of her fortune, which, after the fitting

* Two tragedies founded on this story had already appeared, before Johnson conceived his intention of producing a third. The former of these was written by Gilbert Swinhoe, Esq; a native of Northumberland, who lived temp. Car. I. & Car. II.; and was published in 4to. 1658, with the title of Unhappy Fair Irene her Tragedy. See Langbaine’s Account of Dramatic Poets, edit. 1691, p. 499. Of the latter, entitled, Irene or the Fair Greek, 4to. 1708, one Charles Goring, Esq; supposed to be the same person with one of that name who was of Magdalen college, Oxford, and in 1687 took the degree of Master of Arts, was the author. See Biographia Dramatica, art. Goring, Charles, Esq.

up and furnishing the same, together with two years' expenditure, must be supposed to be left; and, that this could be no other than small, may be inferred from her natural temper, which it is said was as little disposed to parsimony as that of her husband.

It is not my intention to pursue the history of Mr. Garrick's progress in life, both because I have not taken upon me to be his biographer, and, because the principal events of it occur in the memoirs of him, written with great candour and, I dare say, truth, by Mr. Thomas Davies, and by him published in two volumes, octavo; but the course of this narration requires me occasionally to mention such particulars concerning him, as in any manner connect him with the subject I am engaged in; and this leads me to mention a fact concerning them both, that I had from a person now living, who was a witness to it, and of whose veracity the least doubt cannot be entertained. They had been but a short time in London before the stock of money that each set out with, was nearly exhausted; and, though they had not, like the prodigal son, 'wasted their substance in riotous living,' they began, like him, 'to be in want.' In this extremity, Garrick suggested the thought of obtaining credit from a tradesman, whom he had a slight knowledge of, Mr. Wilcox a bookseller, in the Strand: to him they applied, and representing themselves to him, as they really were, two young men, friends, and travellers from the same place, and just arrived with a view to settle here, he was so moved with their artless tale, that, on their joint note, he advanced them all that their modesty would permit them to ask, (five pounds), which was, soon after, punctually repaid.

It has been before related, that Johnson had engaged his pen in the service of Cave; as it seems, under some fictitious name, perhaps, that common one of Smith, which he directs Cave to address him by, in his letter of 25th Nov. 1734. Being now come to town, and determined, or rather constrained, to rely on the labour of his brain for support, he, to improve the correspondence he had formed, thought proper to discover himself, and in his real name to communicate to Cave a project which he had formed, and which the following letter will explain:

Greenwich, next door to the Golden-Heart,
Church-street, July 12, 1737.

SIR,

‘ Having observed in your papers very uncommon
‘ offers of encouragement to men of letters, I have
‘ chosen, being a stranger in London, to communi-
‘ cate to you the following design, which, I hope,
‘ if you join in it, will be of advantage to both of
‘ us.

‘ The history of the Council of Trent, having
‘ been lately translated into French, and published
‘ with large notes by Dr. Le Courayer, the reputa-
‘ tion of that book is so much revived in England,
‘ that, it is presumed, a new translation of it from
‘ the Italian, together with Le Courayer’s notes from
‘ the French, could not fail of a favourable recep-
‘ tion.

‘ If it be answered that the history is already in
‘ English, it must be remembered that there was
‘ the same objection against Le Courayer’s undertak-
‘ ing, with this disadvantage, that the French had
‘ a version by one of their best translators, whereas

‘ you cannot read three pages of the English history
 ‘ without discovering that the style is capable of great
 ‘ improvements; but whether those improvements
 ‘ are to be expected from this attempt, you must
 ‘ judge from the specimen, which, if you approve
 ‘ the proposal, I shall submit to your examina-
 ‘ tion.

‘ Suppose the merit of the versions equal, we may
 ‘ hope that the addition of the notes will turn the
 ‘ balance in our favour, considering the reputation of
 ‘ the Annotator.

‘ Be pleased to favour me with a speedy answer, if
 ‘ you are not willing to engage in this scheme; and
 ‘ appoint me a day to wait on you, if you are.

‘ I am, Sir, your humble servant,

‘ SAM. JOHNSON.’

Cave’s acquiescence, in the above proposal, drew Johnson into a close intimacy with him: he was much at St. John’s Gate, and taught Garrick the way thither. Cave had no great relish for mirth, but he could bear it; and having been told by Johnson, that his friend had talents for the theatre, and was come to London with a view to the profession of an actor, expressed a wish to see him in some comic character: Garrick readily complied; and, as Cave himself told me, with a little preparation of the room over the great arch of St. John’s gate, and, with the assistance of a few journeymen printers, who were called together for the purpose of reading the other parts, represented, with all the graces of comic humor, the principal character in Fielding’s farce of the Mock-Doctor.

Cave’s

Cave's temper was phlegmatic : though he assumed, as the publisher of the Magazine, the name of Sylvanus Urban, he had few of those qualities that constitute the character of urbanity. Judge of his want of them by this question, which he once put to an author :
 ' Mr. —, I hear you have just published a pamphlet, and am told there is a very good paragraph in it, upon the subject of music : did you write that yourself ?' His discernment was also slow ; and as he had already at his command some writers of prose and verse, who, in the language of bookfellers are called good hands,* he was the backwarde in making advances,

* Mr. Moses Browne, originally a pen-cutter, was, so far as concerned the poetical part of it, the chief support of the Magazine, which he fed with many a nourishing morsel. This person being a lover of angling, wrote piscatory eclogues ; and was a candidate for the fifty pound prize mentioned in Johnson's first letter to Cave, and for other prizes which Cave engaged to pay him who should write the best poem on certain subjects ; in all or most of which competitions Mr. Browne had the good fortune to succeed. He published these and other poems of his writing, in an octavo volume, Lond. 1739 ; and has therein given proofs of an exuberant fancy and a happy invention. Some years after he entered into holy orders. A farther account of him may be seen in the Biographia Dramatica, to a place in which work he seems to have acquired a title, by some juvenile compositions for the stage. Being a person of a religious turn, he also published in verse, a series of devout contemplations, called Sunday Thoughts. Johnson, who often expressed his dislike of religious poetry, and who, for the purpose of religious meditation, seemed to think one day as proper as another, read them with cold approbation, and said, he had a great mind to write and publish Monday Thoughts.

To the proofs above adduced of the coarseness of Cave's manners, let me add the following : he had undertaken, at his own risque, to publish a translation of Du Halde's History of China, in which
 were

advances, or courting an intimacy with Johnson. Upon the first approach of a stranger, his practice was to continue sitting, a posture in which he was ever to be found, and, for a few minutes, to continue silent: if

were contained sundry geographical and other plates. Each of these he inscribed to one or other of his friends; and, among the rest, one '*To Moses Browne.*' With this blunt and familiar designation of his person, Mr. Browne was justly offended: to appease him, Cave directed an engraver, to introduce with a caret under the line, *Mr.* and thought, that in so doing, he had made ample amends to Mr. Browne for the indignity done him.

Mr. John Duick, also a pen-cutter, and a near neighbour of Cave, was a frequent contributor to the Magazine, of short poems, written with spirit and ease. He was a kinsman of Browne, and the author of a good copy of encomiastic verses prefixed to the collection of Browne's poems above-mentioned.

Mr. Foster Webb, a young man who had received his education in Mr. Watkins's academy in Spital-square, and afterwards became clerk to a merchant in the city, was, at first, a contributor to the Magazine, of enigmas, a species of poetry in which he then delighted, but was dissuaded from it by the following lines, which appeared in the Magazine for October, 1740, after a few successful essays in that kind of writing:

- ' Too modest bard, with enigmatic veil
- ' No longer let thy muse her charms conceal;
- ' Though oft the Sun in clouds his face disguise,
- ' Still he looks nobler when he gilds the skies.
- ' Do thou, like him, avow thy native flame,
- ' Burst thro' the gloom, and brighten into fame.'

After this friendly exhortation, Mr. Webb, in those hours of leisure which business afforded, amused himself with translating from the Latin classics, particularly Ovid and Horace: from the latter of these he rendered into English verse, with better success than any that had before attempted it, the odes '*Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa;*' '*Solvitur acris hyems grata vice veris, & Favoni,*' '*Parcus Deorum cultor & infrequens;*' and '*Diffugere nives, redeunt jam gramina campis;*' all which are inserted in Cave's Magazine.

if at any time he was inclined to begin the discourse, it was generally by putting a leaf of the Magazine, then in the press, into the hand of his visitor, and asking his opinion of it. I remember that, calling in on him

Magazine. His signature was sometimes Telarius, at others Vedastus. He was a modest, ingenious, and sober young man; but a consumption defeated the hopes of his friends, and took him off in the twenty-second year of his age.

Mr. John Smith, another of Mr. Watkins's pupils, was a writer in the Magazine, of prose essays, chiefly on religious and moral subjects, and died of a decline about the same time.

Mr. John Canton, apprentice to the above-named Mr. Watkins, and also his successor in his academy, was a contributor to the Magazine, of verses, and afterwards, of papers on philosophical and mathematical subjects. The discoveries he made in electricity and magnetism are well known, and are recorded in the transactions of the Royal Society, of which he afterwards became a member.

Mr. William Rider, bred in the same prolific seminary, was a writer in the Magazine, of verses signed Philargyrus. He went from school to Jesus college, Oxford, and, some years after his leaving the same, entered into holy orders, and became sur-master of St. Paul's school, in which office he continued many years, but at length was obliged to quit that employment by reason of his deafness.

Mr. Adam Calamy, a son of Dr. Edmund Calamy, an eminent non-conformist divine, and author of the Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's History of his Life and Times, was another of Mr. Watkins's pupils, that wrote in the Magazine; the subjects on which he chiefly exercised his pen were essays in polemical theology and republican politics; and he distinguished them by the assumed signature of '*A consistent protestant.*' He was bred to the profession of an attorney, and was brother to Mr. Edmund Calamy, a dissenting teacher, of eminence for his worth and learning.

A seminary, of a higher order than that above-mentioned, viz. the academy of Mr. John Eames in Moorfields, furnished the Magazine with a number of other correspondents in mathematics and other branches of science and polite literature. This was an institution supported

him once, he gave me to read the beautiful poem of Collins, written for Shakespeare's Cymbeline, 'To fair Fidele's grassy tomb,' which, though adapted to a particular circumstance in the play, Cave was for inserting in his Magazine, without any reference to the subject: I told him it would lose of its beauty if it were so published: this he could not see; nor could he be convinced of the propriety of the name Fidele: he thought Pastora a better, and so printed it.

He was so incompetent a judge of Johnson's abilities, that, meaning at one time to dazzle him with the splendor of some of those luminaries in literature who favoured him with their correspondence, he told him that, if he would, in the evening, be at a certain ale-house in the neighbourhood of Clerkenwell, he might have a chance of seeing Mr. Browne and another or

supported by the Dissenters, the design whereof was to qualify young men for their ministry. Mr. Eames was formerly the continuator of the abridgement of the Philosophical Transactions begun by Jones and Lowthorp, and was a man of great knowledge, and a very able tutor. Under him were bred many young men who afterwards became eminently distinguished for learning and abilities; among them were the late Mr. Parry, of Cirencester, the late Dr. Furneaux, and Dr. Gibbons; and, if I mistake not, the present Dr. Price. The pupils of this academy had heads that teemed with knowledge, which, as fast as they acquired it, they were prompted by a juvenile and laudable ambition to communicate in letters to Mr. Urban.

To this account of Cave's correspondents might be added the celebrated names of Dr. Birch, who will be spoken of hereafter, Mrs. Carter, Dr. Akenfide, the Rev. Mr. Samuel Pegge, who, by an ingenious transposition of the letters of his name, formed the plausible signature of Paul Gemsege; Mr. Luck, of Barnstaple in Devonshire; Mr. Henry Price, of Pool, in Dorsetshire; Mr. Richard Yate, of Chively, in Shropshire; Mr. John Bancks; and, that industrious and prolific genius, Mr. John Lackman.

two of the persons mentioned in the preceding note : Johnson accepted the invitation ; and being introduced by Cave, dressed in a loose horseman's coat, and such a great bushy uncombed wig as he constantly wore, to the sight of Mr. Browne, whom he found sitting at the upper end of a long table, in a cloud of tobacco-smoke, had his curiosity gratified.

Johnson saw very clearly those offensive particulars that made a part of Cave's character ; but, as he was one of the most quick-sighted men I ever knew in discovering the good and amiable qualities of others, a faculty which he has displayed, as well in the life of Cave, as in that of Savage, printed among his works, so was he ever inclined to palliate their defects ; and, though he was above courting the patronage of a man, whom, for many reasons, he could not but hold cheap, he disdained not to accept it, when tendered with any degree of complacency.

And this was the general tenor of Johnson's behaviour ; for, though his character through life was marked with a roughness that approached to ferocity, it was in the power of almost every one to charm him into mildness, and to render him gentle and placid, and even courteous, by such a patient and respectful attention as is due to every one, who, in his discourse, signifies a desire either to instruct or delight. Bred to no profession, without relations, friends, or interest, Johnson was an adventurer in the wide world, and had his fortunes to make : the arts of insinuation and address were, in his opinion, too slow in their operation to answer his purpose ; and, he rather chose to display his parts to all the world, at the risque of being thought arrogant, than to wait for the assistance
of

of such friends as he could make, or the patronage of some individual that had power or influence, and who might have the kindness to take him by the hand, and lift him into notice. With all that asperity of manners with which he has been charged, and which kept at a distance many, who, to my knowledge, would have been glad of an intimacy with him, he possessed the affections of pity and compassion in a most eminent degree. In a mixed company, of which I was one, the conversation turned on the pestilence which raged in London, in the year 1665, and gave occasion to Johnson to speak of Dr. Nathanael Hodges, who, in the height of that calamity, continued in the city, and was almost the only one of his profession that had the courage to oppose the endeavours of his art to the spreading of the contagion. It was the hard fate of this person, a short time after, to die a prisoner for debt, in Ludgate: Johnson related this circumstance to us, with the tears ready to start from his eyes; and, with great energy, said, 'Such a man would not have been suffered to perish in these times.'

It seems by the event of this first expedition, that Johnson came to London for little else than to look about him: it afforded him no opportunity of forming connections, either valuable in themselves, or available to any future purpose of his life. Mr. Pope had seen and commended his translation of the Messiah; but Johnson had not the means of access to him; and, being a stranger to his person, his spirit would not permit him to solicit so great a favour from one, who must be supposed to have been troubled with such kind of applications. With one person, however, he commenced an intimacy, the motives to which, at first

view, may probably seem harder to be accounted for, than any one particular in his life. This person was Mr. Richard Savage, whose misfortunes, together with his vices, had driven him to St. John's gate, and thereby introduced him to the acquaintance of Johnson, which, founded on his part in compassion, soon improved into friendship and a mutual communication of sentiments and counsels. The history of this man is well known by the life of him written by Johnson; which, if in no other respect valuable, is curious, in that it gives to view a character self-formed, as owing nothing to parental nurture, and scarce any thing to moral tuition, and describes a mind, in which, as in a neglected garden, weeds, without the least obstruction, were suffered to grow into luxuriance: nature had endowed him with fine parts, and those he cultivated as well as he was able; but his mind had received no moral culture, and for want thereof, we find him to have been a stranger to humility, gratitude, and those other virtues that tend to conciliate the affections of men, and insure the continuance of friendship.

It may be conjectured that Johnson was captivated by the address and demeanour of Savage, at his first approach; for it must be noted of him, that, though he was always an admirer of genteel manners, he at this time had not been accustomed to the conversation of gentlemen; and Savage, as to his exterior, was, to a remarkable degree, accomplished: he was a handsome, well-made man, and very courteous in the modes of salutation. I have been told, that in the taking off his hat and disposing it under his arm, and in his bow, he displayed as much grace as those actions were capable of; and that he understood the exercise of a gentleman's

man's weapon, may be inferred from the use he made of it in that rash encounter which is related in his life, and to which his greatest misfortunes were owing. These accomplishments, and the ease and pleasantry of his conversation, were, probably, the charms that wrought on Johnson, and hid from his view those baser qualities of Savage, with which, as his historian, he has nevertheless been necessitated to mark his character. The similarity of their circumstances might farther conduce to beget an unreserved confidence in each other; they had both felt the pangs of poverty, and the want of patronage: Savage had let loose his resentment against the possessors of wealth, in a collection of poems printed about the year 1727, and Johnson was ripe for an avowal of the same sentiments: they seemed both to agree in the vulgar opinion, that the world is divided into two classes, of men of merit without riches, and men of wealth without merit; never considering the possibility that both might concenter in the same person, just as when, in the comparison of women, we say, that virtue is of more value than beauty, we forget that many are possessed of both.

In speculations of this kind, and a mutual condolence of their fortunes, they passed many a melancholy hour, and those at a time when, it might be supposed, the reflection on them had made repose desirable: on the contrary, that very reflection is known to have interrupted it. Johnson has told me, that whole nights have been spent by him and Savage in conversations of this kind, not under the hospitable roof of a tavern, where warmth might have invigorated their spirits, and wine dispelled their care; but in a perambulation round the squares of Westminster, St. James's in

particular, when all the money they could both raise was less than sufficient to purchase for them the shelter and fordid comforts of a night cellar.

Of the result of their conversations little can now be known, save, that they gave rise to those principles of patriotism, that both, for some years after, avowed; they both with the same eye saw, or believed they saw, that the then minister meditated the ruin of this country; that excise laws, standing armies, and penal statutes, were the means by which he meant to effect it; and, at the risque of their liberty, they were bent to oppose his measures; but Savage's spirit was broken by the sense of his indigence, and the pressure of those misfortunes which his imprudence had brought on him, and Johnson was left alone to maintain the contest.

The character and manners of Savage were such, as leave us little room to think, that Johnson could profit by his conversation: whatever were his parts and accomplishments, he had no reading, and could furnish no intelligence to such a mind as Johnson's: his vagrant course of life had made him acquainted with the town and its vices; and though I am not warranted to say, that Johnson was infected with them, I have reason to think, that he reflected with as little approbation on the hours he spent with Savage as on any period of his life.

Doubtless there is in the example and conversation of some men a power that fascinates, and suspends the operation of our own will: to this power in Savage, which consisted in the gentleness of his manners, the elegance of his discourse, and the vivacity of his imagination, we must attribute the ascendant which he maintained over the affections of Johnson,

Johnson, and the inability of the latter to pursue the suggestions of his own superior understanding. To the purpose of this sentiment, I am tempted to relate a fact which Mr. Garrick once communicated to me in conversation, who, speaking of the irresistible charm of engaging manners, told me, that being an actor at Drury-lane theatre, under Mr. Fleetwood, the patentee thereof, whose extravagances rendered him incapable of fulfilling his engagements, his salary became deeply in arrear, and he began to feel the want of money: in answer to his many applications for payment, he had obtained promises, and even oaths; but these had been so often broken, that, pressed by necessity, and provoked by ill usage, he was determined to have recourse to law for payment: he however thought it but right to declare his intention; and, for that purpose, invited himself to breakfast with Fleetwood. ‘It was on a Sunday,’ said Mr. Garrick, ‘that he appointed to see me; he received me with great courtesy and affability, and entertained me for some hours with discourse, foreign to the subject of our meeting, but so bewitching in its kind, that it deprived me of the power of telling him that he owed me six hundred pounds, and that my necessities compelled me to demand it.’

The intimacy between Savage and Johnson continued till the beginning of the year 1738, when the distresses of the former, and the cessation, by the death of Queen Caroline, of a pension, which, for some years, she had directed to be paid him, moved some of his friends to a subscription for his support, in a place so far distant from the metropolis, as to be out of the reach of its temptations; where he might beget

new habits, and indulge himself in those exercises of his imagination, which had been the employment of his happiest hours. The place fixed on for his residence was Swansea in Wales; but as it was some time before the subscription could be completed, his retirement thither was retarded.

In this suspense of Savage's fortunes, Johnson seems to have confirmed himself in a resolution of quarrelling with the administration of public affairs, and becoming a satirist on the manners of the times; and because he thought he saw a resemblance between his own and those of Rome in its decline, he chose to express his sense of modern depravity by an imitation of the third satire of Juvenal, in which, with great judgment, and no less asperity, he drew a parallel between the corruptions of each, and exemplified it by characters, then subsisting. In it he anticipated the departure of his friend Thales, i. e. Savage, whom he describes as

‘ ——— resolv'd, from vice and London far,
 ‘ To breathe, in distant fields, a purer air;
 ‘ And, fix'd in Cambria's solitary shore,
 ‘ Give to St. David one true Briton more.’

To this exercise of his talent he was, probably, excited by the success of Mr. Pope, who had done the same by some of the satires of Horace, and had vindicated, by the example of Dr. Donne a divine, that species of writing, even in Christian times, from the imputation of malevolence and the want of that charity ‘ which is not easily provoked, and endureth all things.’

The

The poem was finished, as appears by a manuscript note of the author in his own corrected copy, in 1738. While he was writing it, he lodged in an upper room of a house in Exeter street, behind Exeter 'change, inhabited by one Norris, a stay-maker; a particular which would have been hardly worth noticing, but that it, in some measure, bespeaks his circumstances at the time, and accounts for his having, more than once, mentioned in the poem, and that with seeming abhorrence, the dungeons of the Strand. It is not unlikely that his aversion to such an abode was increased by the reflection on that distress, which by this time had brought his wife to town, and obliged her to participate in the inconveniences of a dwelling too obscure to invite resort, and to be a witness of the difficulties with which he was struggling.

Having completed his poem, he looked round for a bookseller, to whom, with a likelihood of obtaining the value of it, he might treat for the sale of it. His friend Cave, in respect of publications, was a haberdasher of small wares; the greatest of his undertakings being a translation of Du Halde's History of China, which was never completed.

Johnson thinking him a man for his purpose, made him an offer of his poem, in a letter in which, with great art, but without the least violation of truth, he conceals that himself was the author of it. The letter I here insert, as also another of his on the same subject.

‘ SIR,

‘ When I took the liberty of writing to you a few
‘ days ago, I did not expect a repetition of the same
‘ pleasure

‘ pleasure so soon, for a pleasure I shall always think
‘ it to converse in any manner with an ingenious and
‘ candid man; but having the inclosed poem in my
‘ hands to dispose of for the benefit of the author (of
‘ whose abilities I shall say nothing since I send you
‘ his performance,) I believed I could not procure
‘ more advantageous terms from any person than from
‘ you, who have so much distinguished yourself by
‘ your generous encouragement of poetry, and whose
‘ judgment of that art, nothing but your commenda-
‘ tion of my trifle can give me any occasion to call
‘ in question. I do not doubt but you will look over
‘ this poem with another eye, and reward it in a diffe-
‘ rent manner from a mercenary bookseller, who counts
‘ the lines he is to purchase, and considers nothing but
‘ the bulk. I cannot help taking notice that, be-
‘ sides what the author may hope for on account of
‘ his abilities, he has likewise another claim to your
‘ regard, as he lies at present under very disadvantage-
‘ ous circumstances of fortune. I beg, therefore, that
‘ you will favour me with a letter to-morrow, that I
‘ may know what you can afford to allow him, that he
‘ may either part with it to you, or find out (which I
‘ do not expect) some other way more to his satisfac-
‘ tion.

‘ I have only to add, that I am sensible I have
‘ transcribed it very coarsely, which, after having al-
‘ tered it, I was obliged to do. I will, if you please
‘ to transmit the sheets from the press, correct it for
‘ you, and will take the trouble of altering any stroke
‘ of satire which you may dislike.

‘ By exerting on this occasion your usual generosity,
‘ you will not only encourage learning and relieve
‘ distress,

‘ distress, but (though it be in comparison of the other
‘ motives of very small account) oblige in a very sen-
‘ sible manner, Sir,

‘ Your very humble servant,

‘ SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘ SIR,

Monday, No. 6, Castle-street.

‘ I am to return you thanks for the present you
‘ were so kind to send me, and to intreat that you
‘ will be pleased to inform me, by the Penny-Post,
‘ whether you resolve to print the poem. If you
‘ please to send it me by the post, with a note to
‘ Doddsley, I will go and read the lines to him, that
‘ we may have his consent to put his name in the
‘ title page. As to the printing, if it can be set im-
‘ mediately about, I will be so much the author’s
‘ friend, as not to content myself with mere sollicita-
‘ tions in his favour. I propose, if my calculation be
‘ near the truth, to engage for the reimbursement of
‘ all that you shall lose by an impression of 500, pro-
‘ vided, as you very generously propose, that the pro-
‘ fit, if any, be set aside for the author’s use, excepting
‘ the present you made, which, if he be a gainer, it is
‘ fit he should repay. I beg you will let one of your
‘ servants write an exact account of the expence of such
‘ an impression, and send it with the poem, that I
‘ may know what I engage for. I am very sensible,
‘ from your generosity on this occasion, of your regard
‘ to learning, even in its unhappiest state ; and cannot
‘ but think such a temper deserving of the gratitude
‘ of those, who suffer so often from a contrary dispo-
‘ sition.

‘ I am, Sir,

‘ Your most humble servant,

‘ SAM. JOHNSON.’

Johnson

Johnson and Doddsley were soon agreed; the price asked by the one and assented to by the other, was, as I have been informed, fifty pounds; a reward for his labour and ingenuity, that induced Johnson ever after to call Doddsley his patron. It is pretty certain that in his offer of the poem to Doddsley, Cave stipulated for the printing of it, for it came abroad in the year above-mentioned with the name of Cave as the printer, though without that of the author. Lord Lyttelton, the instant it was published, carried it in rapture to Mr. Pope, who, having read it, commended it highly, and was very importunate with Doddsley to know the author's name; but, that being a secret the latter was bound not to reveal, Pope assured him that he could not long be unknown, recollecting, perhaps, a passage recorded of Milton, who, seeing a beautiful young lady pass him whom he never had seen before, turned to look at her, and said, 'Whoever thou art, thou canst not long be concealed.'

The topics of this spirited poem, so far as it respects this country, or the time when it was written, are evidently drawn from those weekly publications, which, to answer the view of a malevolent faction, first created, and for some years supported, a distinction between the interests of the government and the people, under the several denominations of the court and the country parties: these publications were carried on under the direction of men, professing themselves to be whigs and friends of the people, in a paper intitled, 'The Country Journal or the Craftsman,' now deservedly forgotten, the end whereof was, to blow the flame of national discontent, to delude the honest and well-meaning people of this country into a belief that the minister
was

was its greatest enemy, and that his opponents, only, meant its welfare. To this end it was necessary to furnish them with subjects of complaint, and these were plentifully disseminated among them; the chief of them were, that science was unrewarded, and the arts neglected; that the objects of our politics were peace and the extension of commerce; that the wealth of the nation was unequally divided, for that, while some were poor, others were able to raise palaces and purchase manors; that restraints were laid on the stage; that the land was plundered, and the nation cheated; our senators hirelings, and our nobility venal; and, lastly, that in his visits to his native country, the king drained this of its wealth.

That Johnson has adopted these vulgar complaints, his poem must witness. I shall not take upon me to demonstrate the fallacy of most of the charges contained in it, nor animadvert on the wickedness of those, who, to effect their own ambitious designs, scruple not to oppose the best endeavours of the person in power, nor shall I mark the folly of those who suffer themselves to be so deluded: the succession of knave to knave, and fool to fool, is hereditary and interminable: our fathers were deceived by the pretensions of false patriots; the delusion stopped not with their children, nor will it with our's.

The publication of this poem was of little advantage to Johnson, other than the relief of his immediate wants: it procured him fame, but no patronage. He was therefore disposed to embrace any other prospect of advantage that might offer; for, a short time after, viz. in August 1738, hearing that the master-ship

ship of Appleby school in Leicestershire was become vacant, he, by the advice of Sir Thomas Griesly a Derbyshire baronet, and other friends, went to Appleby, and offered himself as a candidate for that employment; but the statutes of the school requiring, that the person chosen should be a Master of Arts, his application was checked. To get over this difficulty, he found means to obtain from the late Lord Gower, a letter to a friend of his, soliciting his interest with Dean Swift towards procuring him a master's degree from the university of Dublin: the letter has appeared in print, but with a mistaken date of the year, viz. 1737; for it mentions Johnson's being the author of the poem of 'London,' which, as I have above fixed it, was written in 1738. It is as follows:

' SIR,

' Mr. Samuel Johnson, (author of London a satire,
' and some other poetical pieces,) is a native of this
' country, and much respected by some worthy gentlemen in his neighbourhood, who are trustees of a
' charity school now vacant, the certain salary of which
' is 60l. per year, of which they are desirous to make
' him master; but, unfortunately, he is not capable of
' receiving their bounty, which would make him happy for life, by not being a Master of Arts, which, by
' the statutes of this school, the master of it must
' be.

' Now these gentlemen do me the honour to think,
' that I have interest enough in you to prevail upon
' you to write to Dean Swift, to persuade the university
' of Dublin to send a diploma to me, constituting this
' poor man Master of Arts in their university. They
' highly

' highly extol the man's learning and probity, and will
 ' not be persuaded that the university will make any
 ' difficulty of conferring such a favour upon a stranger,
 ' if he is recommended by the Dean. They say he
 ' is not afraid of the strictest examination, though he
 ' is of so long a journey, and will venture it if the
 ' Dean thinks it necessary, choosing rather to die upon
 ' the road, than to be starved to death in translating
 ' for bookfellers, which has been his only subsistence
 ' for some time past.

' I fear there is more difficulty in this affair than
 ' these good-natured gentlemen apprehend, especially,
 ' as their election cannot be delayed longer than the
 ' 11th of next month. If you see this matter in the
 ' same light that it appears to me, I hope you will
 ' burn this and pardon me for giving you so much
 ' trouble about an impracticable thing; but if you
 ' think there is a probability of obtaining the favour
 ' asked, I am sure your humanity and propensity to
 ' relieve merit in distress, will incline you to serve the
 ' poor man, without my adding any more to the trou-
 ' ble I have already given you, than assuring you that
 ' I am, with great truth,

' Sir,

' Your faithful humble servant,

' Trentham, August 1, 1737.

GOWER.'

If ever Johnson had reason to lament the shortness
 of his stay at the university, it was now. The want of
 an honour, which, after a short efflux of years, is con-
 ferred almost of course, was, at this crisis, his greatest
 misfortune: it stood between him and the acquisition
 of an income of 60l. a year, in a country and at a
 time

time that made it equivalent to a much larger sum at present.

The letter of Lord Gower failing of its effect, Johnson returned to London, resolving on a vigorous effort to supply his wants: this was a translation into English of Father Paul's History of the Council of Trent*: the former by Sir Nathaniel Brent, though a faithful one, being, in the judgment of some persons, rather obsolete. Johnson was well enough skilled in the Italian language for the undertaking, and was encouraged to it by many of his friends; as namely, Mr. Walmsley, Mr. Caslon the letter-founder, Mr. [afterwards Dr.] Birch, and others; but he chose to make it a joint project, and take Cave into the adventure, who, as the work proceeded, advanced him small sums, at two or three guineas a week, amounting together to near fifty pounds.†

It happened at this time that another person of the same christian and surname, the then keeper of Dr. Tenison's library in St. Martin's parish, had engaged in the like design, and was supported therein by Dr. Zachary Pearce, and also by most of the bishops, and by many of the dignified clergy, which being the case, the solicitations in behalf of the two versions crossed

* Vide Gent. Mag. for Jan. 1785, page 6.

† Proposals for publishing it were advertised in the Weekly Miscellany of 21st Oct. 1738, in the following terms: 'Just published, proposals for printing the History of the Council of Trent, translated from the Italian of Father Paul Sarpi, with the author's life, and notes Theological, Historical and Critical, from the French edition of Dr. Le Courayer. To which are added, observations on the history and notes; and illustrations from various authors, both printed and manuscript, by S. Johnson, in two volumes quarto.'

each other, and rendered both abortive. Twelve quarto sheets of Johnson's were printed off; but what became of the other is not known. This disappointment, however mortifying, did not hinder Johnson from prosecuting a part of his original design, and writing the life of the author, which, with the assistance of a life of him, written by an Italian nobleman, whose name I could never learn, and published in a closely printed duodecimo, he was enabled to complete, and in an abridgment to insert in Cave's Magazine.

Various other projects about this time did he form of publications on literary subjects, which, in a subsequent page, by the help of a list in his own hand-writing, I have enumerated, but they were either blasted by other publications of a similar nature, or abandoned for want of encouragement.

However, that he might not be totally unemployed, Cave engaged him to undertake a translation of an Examen of Pope's Essay on Man, written by Mr. Croufaz, a professor in Switzerland, who had acquired some eminence by a treatise on Logic of his writing, and also, by his Examen de Pyrrhonisme; and of whom Johnson, after observing that he was no mean antagonist, has given this character:---' His mind was one
' of those in which philosophy and piety are happily
' united. He was accustomed to argument and disquisition, and perhaps was grown too desirous of detecting faults, but his intention was always right, his
' opinions were solid, and his religion pure. His incessant vigilance for the promotion of piety disposed
' him to look with distrust upon all metaphysical systems of Theology, and all schemes of virtue and happiness purely rational; and therefore, it was not long

‘ before he was persuaded that the positions of Pope,
 ‘ as they terminated for the most part in natural reli-
 ‘ gion, were intended to draw mankind away from
 ‘ Revelation, and to represent the whole course of
 ‘ things as a necessary concatenation of indissoluble
 ‘ fatality; and it is undeniable, that in many passages,
 ‘ a religious eye may easily discover expressions not
 ‘ very favourable to morals or to liberty.’*

The reputation of the Essay on Man soon after its publication invited a translation of it into French, which was undertaken and completed by the Abbé Resnel, and falling into the hands of Croufaz, drew from him first a general censure of the principles maintained in the poem, and afterwards, a commentary thereon containing particular remarks on every paragraph. The former of these it was that Johnson translated, as appears by the following letter of his to Cave, which is rendered somewhat remarkable by his styling himself *Impransus*.

‘ Dear SIR,

‘ I am pretty much of your opinion, that the Com-
 ‘ mentary cannot be prosecuted with any appearance
 ‘ of success; for, as the names of the authors con-
 ‘ cerned are of more weight in the performance than
 ‘ its own intrinsic merit, the public will be soon satis-
 ‘ fied with it. And I think the Examen should be
 ‘ pushed forward with the utmost expedition. Thus,
 “ This day, &c. An Examen of Mr. Pope’s essay, &c.
 “ containing a succinct account of the philosophy of
 “ Mr. Leibnitz on the system of the Fatalists, with a

* Life of Pope among the poets.

“ confutation of their opinions, and an illustration of
“ the doctrine of Free-will,” with what else you think
“ proper.

‘ It will, above all, be necessary to take notice,
‘ that it is a thing distinct from the Commentary.

‘ I was so far from imagining they [the compositors]
‘ stood still, that I conceived them to have a good deal
‘ beforehand, and therefore was less anxious in pro-
‘ viding them more. But if ever they stand still on
‘ my account, it must doubtless be charged to me;
‘ and whatever else will be reasonable I shall not op-
‘ pose; but beg a suspense of judgment till morning,
‘ when I must intreat you to send me a dozen proposals,
‘ and you shall then have copy to spare.

‘ I am, Sir, your’s, *impransus*,

‘ SAM. JOHNSON.’

Johnson’s translation of the Examen was printed by
Cave, and came abroad, but without a name, in No-
vember, 1738, bearing the title of, ‘An Examination
‘ of Mr. Pope’s Essay on Man, containing a succinct
‘ view of the system of the Fatalists, and a confutation
‘ of their opinions; with an illustration of the doctrine
‘ of Free-Will, and an enquiry what view Mr. Pope
‘ might have in touching upon the Leibnitzian Philo-
‘ sophy and Fatalism. By Mr. Croufaz, professor of
‘ Philosophy and Mathematics at Laufanne, &c.’

All the world knows that the Essay on Man was
composed from the dictamen of Lord Bolingbroke,
and it is little less notorious that Pope was but mean-
ly skilled in that sort of learning to which the subject
of his poem related: he had not been conversant with
the writings or opinions of the different sects of phi-

losophers of whom some maintained and others denied the freedom of the will, and knew little more of the arguments for and against human liberty in opposition to what is called Necessity, than he was able to gather from the controversy between Anthony Collins and his opponents, or that between Dr. Clarke and Leibnitz. He was therefore unable to defend what he had written, and stood a dead mark for his adversaries to shoot at. Fortunate for him it was, that at this crisis there was living such a person as Mr. Warburton; and Pope had for all the remainder of his life reason to reflect with pleasure on the accident that brought them acquainted, and which I will presently relate.

Warburton's origin and rise into literary reputation are pretty well known. He had served a clerkship to an attorney the town-clerk of Newark upon Trent, and for a short time was himself a practiser in that profession; but having a strong propensity to learning, he determined to quit it, and pursue a course of study such as was necessary to qualify him for the ministerial function, and having completed it, got admitted into holy orders, and settled in London, where, upon his arrival, he became acquainted with some of the inferior wits, Concannen, Theobald, and others the enemies of Pope, and adopted many of their sentiments. In a letter to the former of these he writes, 'Dryden I observe borrows for want of leisure, and Pope for want of genius; Milton out of pride, and Addison out of modesty;' further he assisted Theobald with notes on many passages in his edition of Shakespeare, which charge Mr. Pope with ignorance, and incapacity for the office of an editor.

But

But leaving literal criticism to these his first associates, Warburton betook himself to studies of greater importance, and before the publication of the *Examen of the Essay on Man*, had made himself known, as an original thinker, by his *Divine Legation of Moses*, a work which, as it met with great opposition, gave him occasion to display a singular talent in controversy. As there was nothing congenial in the minds of him and Pope, they neither of them sought the acquaintance of the other, but mere chance brought them together, a chance so propitious to Warburton's fortunes that it became an epoch in his life, and was the leading circumstance to his becoming the owner of a fair estate, and his promotion to a bishopric.

The friendship of these two persons had its commencement in that bookseller's shop which is situate on the West side of the gate-way leading down the Inner Temple-lane. Warburton had some dealings with Jacob Robinson the publisher, to whom the shop belonged, and may be supposed to have been drawn there on business; Pope might have a call of the like kind: however that be, there they met, and entering into a conversation which was not soon ended, conceived a mutual liking, and as we may suppose, plighted their faith to each other. The fruit of this interview and the subsequent communications of the parties was, the publication, in November 1739, of a pamphlet with this title, 'A Vindication of Mr. Pope's Essay on Man. By the author of the *Divine Legation of Moses*. Printed for J. Robinson.'

Whether or not Croufaz ever replied to this vindication, I am not at leisure to enquire. I incline to

think he did not, and that the controversy rested on the foot of the Examen and the Commentary on the one part, and the Vindication on the other. In the year 1743, Johnson took it into his head to review the argument, and became a moderator in a dispute which, on the side of Warburton, had been conducted with a great degree of that indignation and contempt of his adversary, which is visible in most of his writings. This he did in two letters severally published in the Gentleman's Magazine for the months of March and November in the above year, with a promise of more, but proceeded no farther than to state the sentiments of Mr. Croufaz respecting the poem, from a seeming conviction that he was discussing an uninteresting question.

Johnson had already tried his hand at political satire, and had succeeded in it; and though no new occasion offered, he was either urged by distress or prompted by that clamour against the minister which in the year 1739 was become very loud, to join in the popular cry, and as it were, to carry war into his own quarters. This he did in a pamphlet, intitled, 'Marmor Norfolciense, or an essay on an ancient prophetic inscription, in Monkish rhyme, lately discovered near Lynn in Norfolk, by Probus Britannicus.'

This mode of satire, the publication of prophecies adapted to the incidents of the time when written, and not so genuine as that of Nixon, the Cheshire seer, which some thought was fulfilled in 1745, is not an invention so new as many may think. In some instances it has been a mere exercise of wit; in others it has been used as a means to excite a people to sedition.

sedition. Under the first class is noted that mentioned by Lord Bacon ;

‘ When Hempe is spun,

‘ England’s done ;’

whereby, as his lordship says, it was generally conceived, that after the princes had reigned which had the principal letters of that word Hempe, (which were Henry, Edward, Mary, Philip and Elizabeth) England should come to utter confusion; which, adds he, thanks be to God, is verified only in the change of name, for the king’s stile is now no more, of England, but of Britain. Of the latter class of feigned prophecies many have, within these few years, been published by authors who had not wit enough to put them into verse.

The inscription mentioned in the title-page of the Marmor Norfolciense, as also the relation of the manner of finding it, are, as will be readily supposed, equally fictitious, as the sole end of writing and publishing it was to give occasion for a comment, which should concentrate all the topics of popular discontent : accordingly it is insinuated, because an act of parliament had then lately passed, by which it was enacted that all law proceedings should be in English, that therefore few lawyers understood Latin ; and the people are taught to look on the descendants of the Princess Sophia as intruders of yesterday, receiving an estate by voluntary grant, and erecting thereon a claim of hereditary right. The explanation of the prophecy, which is all ironical, resolves itself into an invective against a standing army, a ridicule of the balance of power, complaints of the inactivity of the British lion, and that the Hanover horse was suffered to suck his blood.

A publication so inflammatory as this, could hardly escape the notice of any government, under which the legal idea of a libel might be supposed to exist. The principles it contained were such as the Jacobites of the time openly avowed; and warrants were issued and messengers employed to apprehend the author, who, though he had forborne to subscribe his name to the pamphlet, the vigilance of those in pursuit of him had discovered. To elude the search after him, he, together with his wife, took an obscure lodging in a house in Lambeth marsh, and lay there concealed till the scent after him was grown cold.

In the same year, 1739, an event arose that gave occasion to Johnson again to exercise his talent of satire; viz. the refusal of a licence for acting a tragedy intitled, 'Gustavus Vasa, or the deliverer of his country,' written by Henry Brooke, to account for which seeming injury, some previous information, such as I am now about to give, appears necessary.

The places for theatrical representations in this country were anciently the king's palace, and the mansions of the nobility; but, as the love of them increased, taverns and other public houses in different parts of the city and suburbs, were fitted up for the purpose, and called play-houses. The usurpation and the principles of the times put a stop to stage entertainments: at the restoration they were revived, and the places for representation constructed in the form of theatres: their number, at no time after that period, exceeded four, and in the year 1728, and long before, it was reduced to three, namely, Drury lane, Lincoln's-inn fields, and the French playhouse in the Hay-market. In that
year,

year, a man, of the name of Odell, took a throwster's shop in Ayliffe street, Goodman's fields, and collecting together a number of strolling players of both sexes, opened it as a theatre. Its contiguity to the city, soon made it a place of great resort, and what was apprehended from the advertisement of plays to be exhibited in that quarter of the town, soon followed: the adjacent houses became taverns, in name, but in truth they were houses of lewd resort*; and the former occupiers of them, useful manufacturers and industrious artificers, were driven to seek elsewhere for a residence. In the course of the entertainments of this place, the manager ventured to exhibit some few new plays; among the rest a tragedy, intitled, 'King Charles the First,' containing sentiments suited to the characters of republicans, sectaries and enthusiasts, and a scenical representation of the events of that prince's disastrous reign, better forgotten than remembered. Sober persons thought that the revival of the memory of past transactions of such a kind as these were, would serve no good purpose, but, on the contrary, perpetuate that enmity between the friends to and opponents of our ecclesiastical and civil establishment, which they

* I once, while I was chairman of the Middlesex sessions, tried an indictment for a riot committed in one of these coffee-houses, and in the course of the evidence discovered, that it was kept by a woman, a stiff quaker, and was strangely puzzled to reconcile in my mind such a solecism in manners as the profession of purity with the practice of lewdness. She appeared in court in the plain and neat garb of the people of that persuasion, and was the wife of a seafaring man, who being abroad, had left her to pursue this lawless occupation. I reprov'd her for her course of life, but could not make her sensible that it was scandalous.

had

had heretofore excited; and for suffering such representations as these, they execrated not so much the author as the manager. In this instance, the indignation of the public was ill-directed: the arguments arising from this supposed abuse of histrionical liberty were not local; they proved too much, and rather applied to stage entertainments in general than to the conduct of a particular manager.

But others looked on this new-erected theatre with an eye more penetrating: the merchants of London, then a grave sagacious body of men, found that it was a temptation to idleness and to pleasure that their clerks could not resist: they regretted to see the corruptions of Covent-garden extended, and the seats of industry hold forth allurements to vice and debauchery. The principal of these was Sir John Barnard, a wise and venerable man, and a good citizen: he, as a magistrate, had for some time been watching for such information as would bring the actors at Goodman's-fields play-house within the reach of the vagrant laws; but none was laid before him that he could, with prudence, act upon. At length, however, an opportunity offered, which he not only embraced, but made an admirable use of: Mr. Henry Fielding, then a young barrister without practice, a dramatic poet, and a patriot, under the extreme pressure of necessity, had, in the year 1736, written a comedy, or a farce, we may call it either or both, intitled, 'Pasquin,' a dramatic satire on the times, and brought it on the stage of the little play-house in the Hay-market, which, being calculated to encourage popular clamour, and containing in it many reflections on the public councils, furnished reasons for bringing a bill into the house of commons for prohibiting

ing the acting of any interlude, tragedy, comedy, opera, play, farce, &c. without the authority of his Majesty's letters-patent or a licence from the lord-chamberlain. In this bill a clause was inserted on the motion of Sir John Barnard, and a very judicious one it was, by which it was made penal, even with any such patent or licence, to act or represent any such interlude, &c. in any part of Great Britain, except in the city of Westminster and such other places as his Majesty, in person, should reside in.

Before 1737, the year in which this bill was brought in, the property of Goodman's-fields playhouse had passed into the hands of Mr. Henry Giffard, who, encouraged by a subscription, pulled it down, and, under the direction of Shephard, the architect, the same that afterwards built Covent-garden theatre, had erected a new one. This man, while the bill was depending, petitioned against it, and, in his printed case, represented the injury he was likely to sustain : all the specious arguments of the great sums he had expended on the purchase of the house, and rebuilding it, in scenes, cloaths, &c. were urged with their utmost force, and his right to an equivalent stated ; but all to no effect : the bill passed, and the statute is now part of the law of the land. It is true, an evasion of it was afterwards contrived by an advertisement of a concert, with a play given gratis, but that subterfuge was soon abandoned.

The operation of this statute was two-fold ; it subjected theatrical representations to a licence, and suppressed a nuisance. And here let me observe, that although of plays it is said that they teach morality, and
of

of the stage that it is the mirror of human life, these assertions are mere declamation, and have no foundation in truth or experience: on the contrary, a playhouse, and the regions about it, are the very hot-beds of vice: how else comes it to pass that no sooner is a playhouse opened in any part of the kingdom, than it becomes surrounded by an halo of brothels? Of this truth, the neighbourhood of the place I am now speaking of has had experience; one parish alone, adjacent thereto, having to my knowledge, expended the sum of 1300l. in prosecutions for the purpose of removing those inhabitants, whom, for instruction in the science of human life, the playhouse had drawn thither.

Mr. Brooke, the author above-mentioned, having with his eyes open, and the statute of the tenth of George the second staring him in the face, written a tragedy, in which, as will be presently shewn, under pretence of a laudable zeal for the cause of liberty, he inculcates principles, not only anti-monarchical, but scarcely consistent with any system of civil subordination; what wonder is it, that, under a monarchical government, a licence for such a theatrical representation should be refused? or that such a refusal should be followed by a prohibition of the acting it?

This interposition of legal authority was looked upon by the author's friends, in which number were included all the Jacobites in the kingdom, as an infraction of a natural right, and as affecting the cause of liberty. To express their resentment of this injury, they advised him to send it to the press, and by a subscription to the publication, of near a thousand persons, encouraged others to the like attempts. By means of the printed copy any one is enabled to judge of its
general

general tendency, and, by reflecting on the sentiments inculcated in the following speeches therein to be found, to measure the injustice done him :

Is it of fate that he who assumes a crown
Throws off humanity ?

Beyond the sweeping of the proudest train
That shades a monarch's heel, I prize these weeds.

————— our Dalecarlians
Have oft been known to give a law to kings.

Divide and conquer is the sum of politics.

————— if thou think'st
That empire is of titled birth or blood ;
That nature, in the proud behalf of one,
Shall disenfranchise all her lordly race,
And bow her general issue to the yoke
Of private domination, &c.

————— thou art the minister,
The reverend monitor of vice.

The fence of virtue is a chief's best caution ;
And the firm surety of my people's hearts
Is all the guard that e'er shall wait Gustavus.

The dedication to the play, addressed to the subscribers, gives the reader to understand, that the author had ' studied the ancient laws of his country, ' though not conversant with her present political state, ' that he is ' a friend to national liberty and personal freedom, ' (meaning by the first, ' a state resulting from ' virtue or reason ruling in a breast superior to appetite ' and passion, ' and, by the last, ' a security arising from ' the nature of a well-ordered constitution, for those ad-
vantages

‘vantages and privileges that each man has a right to
 ‘by contributing as a member to the weal of that com-
 ‘munity ;’) these declarations are interspersed with re-
 flections on the lord-chamberlain, and a complaint
 that his treatment of the author ‘was singular and un-
 ‘precedented ;’ after which follows an effusion of patri-
 otic sentiments serving to shew, that a monarch or head
 of such a constitution as he above has described, is
 ‘sceptered in the hearts of his people.’

Upon occasion of this publication, Johnson was em-
 ployed by one Corbet, a bookseller of small note, to
 take up the cause of this injured author, and he did it
 in a pamphlet, intitled, ‘A Compleat Vindication of
 ‘the Licensers of the Stage from the malicious and
 ‘scandalous aspersions of Mr. Brooke, author of
 ‘Gustavus Vasa.’ 4to. 1739.

Criticism would be ill employed in a minute exami-
 nation of the Marmor Norfolciense, and the Vindicati-
 on of the Licensers : in general it may suffice to say that
 they are both ironical, that they display neither learn-
 ing nor wit, and that in neither of them is there to
 be discovered a single ray of that brightness which
 beams so strongly in the author’s moral and po-
 litical essays. Did it become a man of his discern-
 ment, endowed with such powers of reasoning and
 eloquence as he possessed, to adopt vulgar preju-
 dices, or, in the cant of the opposition, to clamor
 against place-men, and pensioners and standing ar-
 mies ? to ridicule the apprehension of that invasion
 in favour of the pretender, which himself, but a few
 years after became a witness to, or to compare the
 improbability of such an event with that of a general
 insurrection of all who were prohibited the use of gin ?

Of

Of all the modes of satire, I know none so feeble as that of uninterrupted irony. The reason of this seems to be, that in that kind of writing the author is compelled to advance positions which no reader can think he believes, and to put questions that can be answered in but one way, and that such an one as thwarts the sense of the propounder. Of this kind of interrogatories the pamphlet I am speaking of seems to be an example; ‘Is the man without pension or
 ‘place to suspect the impartiality or the judgment of
 ‘those who are entrusted with the administration of
 ‘public affairs? Is he, when the law is not strictly
 ‘observed in regard to him, to think himself aggrieved,
 ‘to tell his sentiments in print, to assert his claim to
 ‘better usage, and fly for redress to another tri-
 ‘bunal?’

Who does not see that to these several queries the answer must be in the affirmative? and, if so, the point of the writer’s wit is, in this instance, blunted, and his argument baffled.

In the course of this mock vindication of power, Johnson has taken a wide scope, and adopted all the vulgar topics of complaint as they were vented weekly in the public papers, and in the writings of Bolingbroke, flimsy and malignant as they are. And here let me note a curious sophism of that superficial thinker, which I remember to have seen in his celebrated Dissertation on Parties; but which, not having the book by me, I cite by memory: it is to this purpose: ‘The
 ‘advocates of the minister,’ says his Lordship, ‘defy us
 ‘to shew, that, under his administration, any infraction
 ‘had been made of the original contract.’ To this we answer, that between such an infraction and the loss of
 our

our liberties, there can no point of time intervene; such a cause and such an effect being so closely connected, that we cannot see the one till we feel the other.

Such was the conduct of opposition at this time, and by such futile arguments as the above were the silly people of three kingdoms deluded into a belief, that their liberties were in danger, and that nothing could save this country from impending ruin, and that the most formidable of all the evils they had to dread, was the continuance of the then administration, of which they had nothing worse to say than that they hated it.

The truth is, that Johnson's political prejudices were a mist that the eye of his judgment could not penetrate: in all the measures of government he could see nothing right; nor could he be convinced, in his invectives against a standing army, as the Jacobites affected to call it, that the peasantry of a country was not an adequate defence against an invasion of it by an armed force. He almost asserted in terms, that the succession to the crown had been illegally interrupted, and that from whig-politics none of the benefits of government could be expected. He could but just endure the opposition to the minister because conducted on whig principles; and I have heard him say, that during the whole course of it, the two parties were bidding for the people. At other times, and in the heat of his resentment, I have heard him assert, that, since the death of Queen Anne, it had been the policy of the administration to promote to ecclesiastical dignities none but the most worthless and undeserving men: nor would he then exclude from this bigotted censure those illustrious divines, Wake, Gibson, Sherlock, Butler, Herring, Pearce, and least of all Hoadly; in

in competition with whom he would set Hickes, Brett, Leslie, and others of the nonjurors, whose names are scarcely now remembered. From hence it appears, and to his honour be it said, that his principles co-operated with his necessities, and that the prostitution of his talents, taking the term in one and that its worst sense, could not, in justice, be imputed to him.

But there is another, and a less criminal sense of the word prostitution, in which, in common with all who are called authors by profession, he may be said to stand in need of an excuse. When Milton wrote the *Paradise Lost*, the sum he received for the copy was not his motive, but was an adventitious benefit that resulted from the exercise of his poetical faculty. In Johnson's case, as well in the instances above given as almost all the others that occurred during the course of his life, the impulse of genius was wanting: had that alone operated in his choice of subjects to write on, mankind would have been indebted to him for a variety of original, interesting and useful compositions; and translations of some, and new editions of others of the ancient authors. The truth of which assertion I think I may safely ground on a catalogue of publications projected by him at different periods, and now lying before me, a copy whereof is given below: *

Under

* * DIVINITY.

* A small book of precepts and directions for piety: the hint taken from the directions in the [countess of] 'Morton's' [daily] exercise.

* PHILOSOPHY, HISTORY, and LITERATURE in general.

* History of Criticism as it relates to judging of authors, from Aristotle to the present age. An account of the rise and improvements
Vol. I. C provements

Under this notion of works written with a view to gain, and those that owe their existence to a more liberal motive, a distinction of literary productions arises which

‘ improvements of that art ; of the different opinions of authors ancient and modern.

‘ Translation of the History of Herodian.

‘ New edition of Fairfax’s Translation of Tasso, with notes, glossary, &c.

‘ Chaucer, a new edition of him, from manuscripts and old editions, with various readings, conjectures, remarks on his language, and the changes it had undergone from the earliest times to his age, and from his to the present. With notes explanatory of customs, &c. and references to Boccace and other authors from whom he has borrowed, with an account of the liberties he has taken in telling the stories, his life, and an exact etymological glossary.

‘ Aristotle’s Rhetoric, a translation of it into English.

‘ A Collection of Letters, translated from the modern writers, with some account of the several authors.

‘ Oldham’s Poems, with notes historical and critical.

‘ Roscommon’s Poems, with notes.

‘ Lives of the Philosophers, written with a polite air, in such a manner as may divert as well as instruct.

‘ History of the Heathen Mythology, with an explication of the fables, both allegorical and historical, with references to the poets.

‘ History of the State of Venice, in a compendious manner.

‘ Aristotle’s Ethics, an English translation of them with notes.

‘ Geographical Dictionary from the French.

‘ Hierocles upon Pythagoras, translated into English, perhaps with notes. This is done by Norris.

‘ A book of Letters upon all kinds of subjects.

‘ Claudian, a new edition of his works, cum notis variorum in the manner of Burman.

‘ Tully’s Tusculan Questions, a translation of them.

‘ Tully de Natura Deorum, a translation of those books.

‘ Benzo’s New History of the New World, to be translated.

‘ Machiavel’s History of Florence, to be translated.

‘ History

which Johnson would never allow; on the contrary, to the astonishment of myself who have heard him, and many others, he has frequently declared, that the only

‘ History of the Revival of Learning in Europe, containing an
‘ account of whatever contributed to the restoration of literature,
‘ such as controversies, printing, the destruction of the Greek em-
‘ pire, the encouragement of great men, with the lives of the most
‘ eminent patrons, and most eminent early professors of all kinds of
‘ learning in different countries.

‘ A Body of Chronology, in verse, with historical notes.

‘ A table of the Spectators, Tatlers, and Guardians, distinguished
‘ by figures into six degrees of value, with notes giving the reasons
‘ of preference or degradation.

‘ A Collection of Letters from English authors, with a preface
‘ giving some account of the writers, with reasons for selection and
‘ criticism upon styles, remarks on each letter, if needful.

‘ A Collection of Proverbs from various languages:—Jan. 6—
‘ 53.

‘ A Dictionary to the Common Prayer in imitation of Calmet’s
‘ Dictionary of the Bible. March —52.

‘ A Collection of Stories and Examples like those of Valerius
‘ Maximus. Jan. 10—53.

‘ From Ælian, a volume of select stories, perhaps from others.
‘ Jan. 28—53.

‘ Collection of Travels, Voyages, Adventures, and Descriptions
‘ of Countries.

‘ Dictionary of Ancient History and Mythology.

‘ Treatise on the Study of Polite Literature, containing the his-
‘ tory of learning, directions for editions, commentaries, &c.

‘ Maxims, Characters and Sentiments, after the manner of
‘ Bruyère, collected out of ancient authors, particularly the Greek,
‘ with Apophthegms.

‘ Classical Miscellanies, Select Translations from ancient Greek
‘ and Latin authors.

‘ Lives of illustrious persons, as well of the active as the learned,
‘ in imitation of Plutarch.

‘ Judgment of the learned upon English authors.

‘ Poetical Dictionary of the English tongue.

only true and genuine motive to the writing of books was the assurance of pecuniary profit. Notwithstanding the boldness of this assertion, there are but few that can be persuaded to yield to it; and, after all, the best apology for Johnson will be found to consist in his want of a profession, the pressure of his necessities, and the example of such men as Castalio, Gesner, and Salmasius, among foreigners; and Fuller, Howel, L'Estrange, Dryden, Chambers, and Hume, not to mention others now living, among ourselves.

The principle here noted was not only in the above instance avowed by Johnson, but seems to have been wrought by him into a habit. He was never greedy of money, but without money could not be stimulated to write. I have been told by a clergyman of some eminence with whom he had been long acquainted, that, being to preach on a particular occasion, he applied, as others under a like necessity had frequently done, to Johnson for help. 'I will write a

- ‘ Considerations upon the present state of London.
- ‘ Collection of Epigrams, with notes and observations.
- ‘ Observations on the English language, relating to words, phrases, and modes of Speech.
- ‘ Minutiæ Literariæ, Miscellaneous reflections, criticisms, emendations, notes.
- ‘ History of the Constitution.
- ‘ Comparison of Philosophical and Christian Morality by sentences collected from the moralists and fathers.
- ‘ Plutarch’s Lives in English, with notes.

‘ POETRY and works of IMAGINATION.

- ‘ Hymn to Ignorance.
- ‘ The Palace of Sloth—a vision.
- ‘ Coluthus, to be translated.
- ‘ Prejudice—a poetical essay.
- ‘ The Palace of Nonsense—a vision.’

‘ sermon

‘sermon for thee,’ said Johnson, ‘but thou must pay me for it.’

Yet was he not so indifferent to the subjects that he was requested to write on, as at any time to abandon either his religious or political principles. He would no more have put his name to an Arian or Socinian tract than to a defence of Atheism. At the time when ‘Faction Detected’ came out, a pamphlet of which the late lord Egmont is now generally understood to have been the author, Osborne the bookseller, held out to him a strong temptation to answer it, which he refused, being convinced, as he assured me, that the charge contained in it was made good, and that the argument grounded thereon was unanswerable.

Indeed whoever peruses that masterly performance must be convinced that a spirit similar to that which induced the Israelites, when under the conduct of their wise legislator, to cry out ‘Ye take too much upon ye,’ is the most frequent motive to opposition, and that whoever hopes to govern a free people by reason, is mistaken in his judgment of human nature. ‘He,’ says Hooker, ‘that goeth about to persuade a people that they are not well governed, shall never want attentive and favourable hearers:’ and the same author speaking of legislation in general, delivers this as his sentiment: ‘Laws politic ordained for external order and regimen amongst men are never framed as they should be, unless presuming the will of man to be obstinate, rebellious and averse from all obedience unto the sacred laws of his nature: In a word, unless presuming man, in regard of his depraved mind, little better than a wild beast, they do accordingly provide, notwithstanding, so to frame his outward actions as that they be no hindrance unto the common good, for which societies

‘ were instituted. Unless they do this they are not perfect.’ Eccles. Pol. Lib. I. Sect. 1. Ibid. Sect. 10.

That these were the sentiments of Johnson also, I am warranted to say, by frequent declarations to the same purpose, which I have heard him make; and to these I attribute it, that he ever after acquiesced in the measures of government through the succession of administrations.

It has already been mentioned in the account above given of Savage, that the friends of that ill-starred man had set on foot a subscription for his support, and that Swansea was the place they had fixed on for his residence: the same was completed at the end of the year 1739. Johnson at that time lodged at Greenwich, and there parted with that friend and companion of his midnight rambles, whom it was never his fortune again to see. The event is antedated in the poem of ‘ London’; but in every particular, except the difference of a year, what is there said of the departure of Thales must be understood of Savage, and looked upon as true history. In his life of Savage, Johnson has mentioned the circumstances that attended it, and deplored this separation as he would have done a greater misfortune than it proved: that it was, in reality, none, may be inferred from Savage’s inability, arising from his circumstances, his course of life, and the laxity of his mind, to do good to any one: it is rather to be suspected that his example was contagious, and tended to confirm Johnson in his indolence and those other evil habits which it was the labour of his life to conquer. They who were witnesses of Johnson’s persevering temperance in the article of drinking, for, at least, the latter half of his life, will scarcely believe that, during part of the former, he was a lover of wine, that he not
only

only indulged himself in the use of it when he could procure it, but, with a reflex delight, contemplated the act of drinking it, with all the circumstances that render it grateful to the palate or pleasing to the eye: in the language of Solomon ‘he looked upon the wine
 ‘ when it was red, when it gave his colour in the cup,
 ‘ and when it moved itself aright *.’ In contradiction to those, who, having a wife and children, prefer domestic enjoyments to those which a tavern affords, I have heard him assert, that a tavern-chair was the throne of human felicity.—‘As soon,’ said he, ‘as I enter
 ‘ the door of a tavern, I experience an oblivion of care,
 ‘ and a freedom from solicitude †: when I am seated, I
 ‘ find the master courteous, and the servants obsequious
 ‘ to my call; anxious to know and ready to supply my
 ‘ wants: wine there exhilarates my spirits, and prompts
 ‘ me to free conversation and an interchange of discourse
 ‘ with those whom I most love: I dogmatise and am
 ‘ contradicted, and in this conflict of opinions and sentiments I find delight.’

How

* Proverbs, chap. xxiii. v. 31.

† It is worthy of remark by those who are curious in observing customs and modes of living, how little these houses of entertainment are now frequented, and what a diminution in their number has been experienced in London and Westminster in a period of about forty years backward. The history of taverns in this country may be traced back to the time of Hen. IV. for so ancient is that of the Boar’s Head in Eastcheap, the rendezvous of Prince Henry and his lewd companions, as we learn from Shakespeare. Of little less antiquity is the White Hart without Bishop’s-gate, which now bears in the front of it the date of its erection, 1480.

Anciently there stood in Old Palace-yard, Westminster, a tavern known by the sign of the White Rose, the symbol of the York faction. It was near the chapel of our Lady behind the high altar of the abbey-church. Together with that chapel it was, in 1503,

How far his conversations with Savage might induce him thus to delight in tavern-society, which is often a temptation to greater enormities than excessive drinking, cannot now be known, nor would it answer any good purpose to enquire. It may, nevertheless, be conjectured, that whatever habits he had contracted of idleness, neglect of his person, or indifference in the choice of his company, received no correction or check from such an example as Savage's conduct held forth; and farther it is conjectured, that he would have been less troubled with those reflections, which, in his latest hours, are known to have given him uneasiness, had he never become acquainted with one so loose in his morals, and so well acquainted with the vices of the town as this man appears to have been. We are to remember that Johnson was, at this time, a husband; can it therefore be supposed that the society of such a man as Savage had any tendency to improve him in the exercise of the domestic virtues? nay rather we must doubt it, and

pulled down, and on the scite of both was erected the chapel of Henry the Seventh. At the restoration, the Cavaliers and other adherents to the royal party, for joy of that event were for a time incessantly drunk; and from a picture of their manners in Cowley's comedy, Cutter of Coleman-street, must be supposed to have greatly contributed to the increase of taverns. When the frenzy of the times was abated, taverns, especially those about the Exchange, became places for the transaction of almost all manner of business: there accounts were settled, conveyances executed, and there attornies sat, as at inns in the country on market days, to receive their clients. In that space near the Royal Exchange which is encompassed by Lombard, Gracechurch, part of Bishop's-gate and Threadneedle streets, the number of taverns was not so few as twenty, and on the scite of the Bank there stood four. At the Crown, which was one of them, it was not unusual in a morning to draw a butt of mountain, a hundred and twenty gallons, in gills.

ascribe

ascribe to an indifference in the discharge of them, arising from their nocturnal excursions, the incident of a temporary separation of Johnson from his wife, which soon took place, and that, while he was in a lodging in Fleet street, she was harboured by a friend near the Tower. It is true that this separation continued but a short time, and that if indeed his affection, at that instant, was alienated from her, it soon returned; for his attachment to her appears, by a variety of notes and memorandums concerning her in books that she was accustomed to read in, now in my custody, to have been equal to what it ought to be: nay Garrick would often risque offending them both, by mimicking his mode of gallantry and his uxorious behaviour towards her.

The little profit, or indeed reputation, that accrued to Johnson by the writing of political pamphlets, led him to think of other exercises for his pen. He had, so early as 1734, solicited employment of Cave; but Cave's correspondents were so numerous that he had little for him till the beginning of the year 1738, when Johnson conceived a thought of enriching the Magazine with a biographical article, and wrote for it the Life of Father Paul, an abridgement, as it seems to be, of that life of him which Johnson intended to have prefixed to his translation of the History of the Council of Trent. The motive to this and other exertions of the same talent in the lives of Boerhaave, Blake, Barretier, and other eminent persons, was his wants, which at one time were so pressing as to induce him in a letter to Cave, hereinbefore inserted, to intimate to him that he wanted a dinner.

Johnson

Johnson who was never deficient in gratitude, for the assistance which he received from Cave became his friend; and, what was more in Cave's estimation than any personal attachment whatever, a friend to his Magazine, for he being at this time engaged in a controversy with a knot of booksellers the proprietors of a rival publication, the London Magazine, Johnson wrote and addressed to him the following Ode:

AD URBANUM.

Urbane, nullis fesse laboribus,
 Urbane, nullis victæ calumniis,
 Cui fronte sertum in erudita
 Perpetuo viret et virebit.

Quid moliatur gens imitantium,
 Quid et minetur, sollicitus parum,
 Vacare solis perge musis
 Juxta animo studiisque felix.

Linguae procacis plumbea spicula,
 Fidens, superbo frange silentio;
 Victrix per obstantes catervas
 Sedulitas animosa tendet.

Intende nervos fortis inanibus
 Risurus olim nisibus Æmuli;
 Intende jam nervos, habebis
 Participes operæ Camœnas.

Non ulla musis pagina gratior
 Quam quæ severis ludicra jungere
 Novit fatigatamque nugis
 Utilibus recreare mentem.

Texente

Texente nymphis ferta Lycoride
 Rosæ ruborem sic viola adjuvat
 Immista, sic Iris refulget
 Æthereis variata fucis.

It was published in the Magazine for March 1738,
 and imitated in the following stanzas in that for the
 month of May following:

Hail Urban! indefatigable man,
 Unwearied yet by all thy useful toil!
 Whom num'rous slanderers assault in vain;
 Whom no base calumny can put to foil.
 But still the laurel on thy learned brow
 Flourishes fair, and shall for ever grow.

What mean the servile imitating crew,
 What their vain blust'ring, and their empty noise,
 Ne'er seek: but still thy noble ends pursue,
 Unconquer'd by the rabble's venal voice.
 Still to the muse thy studious mind apply,
 Happy in temper as in industry.

The senseless sneerings of an haughty tongue,
 Unworthy thy attention to engage,
 Unheeded pass: and tho' they mean thee wrong,
 By manly silence disappoint their rage.
 Assiduous diligence confounds its foes,
 Resistless, tho' malicious crouds oppose.

Exert thy powers, nor slacken in the course,
 Thy spotless fame shall quash all false reports:
 Exert thy powers, nor fear a rival's force,
 But thou shalt smile at all his vain efforts;
 Thy labours shall be crown'd with large success;
 The muse's aid thy magazine shall bless.

No

No page more grateful to th' harmonious nine
Than that wherein thy labours we survey :

Where solemn themes in fuller splendor shine,
(Delightful mixture,) blended with the gay.

Where in improving, various joys we find,
A welcome respite to the wearied mind.

Thus when the nymphs in some fair verdant mead,
Of various flow'rs a beauteous wreath compose,

The lovely violet's azure-painted head
Adds lustre to the crimson-blushing rose.

Thus splendid Iris, with her varied dye,
Shines in the æther, and adorns the sky.

May 22, 1738.

BRITON.

The provocation that gave rise to this furious contest, as it will presently appear to have been, was the increasing demand for Cave's publication, and the check it gave to the sale of its rival, which at one time was so great as to throw back no fewer than seventy thousand copies on the hands of the proprietors. To revenge this injury, the confederate booksellers gave out, that Sylvanus Urban, whom, for no conceivable reason, they dignified with the appellation of Doctor, was become mad, assigning as the cause of his insanity, his publication in the Magazine of fundry mathematical problems, essays and questions on abstruse subjects, sent him by many of his learned correspondents. Cave who for some months had been rebutting the calumnies of his adversaries, and that with such success as provoked them to the outrage above-mentioned, now felt that he had them at mercy. With that sagacity which we frequently observe, but wonder at in men of slow parts, he seemed to antici-

pate the advice contained in the second and third stanzas of Johnson's ode, and forbore a reply, though not his revenge, which he gratified in such a manner as seems to absolve him from the guilt imputable in most cases to that passion; this he did by inserting as an article of public intelligence in his Historical Chronicle for the month of February 1738, the following paragraph: "Monday 20. About 8 o'clock the famous Dr. Urban, having some time past been possessed with a violent frenzy, broke loose from his nurse, and run all through the streets of London and Westminster distributing quack bills, swearing he would go visit his beautiful *Garden of Eden*; raving against *Common Sense**, and the London Magazine, and singing a mad song set to music by Peter the Wild Youth; but being at last secured, was conveyed to his lodgings in Moorfields, where he continues uttering horrid imprecations against several booksellers and printers. 'Tis thought this poor man's misfortune is owing to his having lately perplexed himself with *biblical questions*, *mathematical problems*, *astronomical equations*, and methods to find the longitude." — '*This silly paragraph, and such like buffoonery, inserted in the newspapers at the charge of the proprietors of the London Magazine, is all the answer given to the remarks on their inimitable preface, some passages of which are quoted in the beginning of this magazine* †.' The

* A party paper so intitled.

† In the course of many years observation I am able to recollect one, and only one, instance of this method of treating a scurrilous adversary. An ingenious mechanic, of the name of Newsham, who with the assistance of the late Dr. Desaguliers, had made many considerable improvements in the construction of engines

The publication in the manner above-mentioned of this senseless and malignant fiction, and the care and attention of Cave in the compilation of his magazine, together with the assistance he received from a variety of ingenious and learned correspondents, enabled him in a short time to triumph over his rivals, and increased the sale thereof to a number that no other could ever equal.

It was no part of Cave's original design to give the debates in either house of parliament, but the opposition to the minister, and the spirit that conducted it, had excited in the people a great eagerness to know what was going forward in both, and he knew that to gratify that desire was to encrease the demand for his pamphlet. Indeed the experiment had already been made, for the speeches in parliament had for some time been given in the Political State of Great Britain, a publication above spoken of, and though drawn up by persons no way equal to such an undertaking, were well received. These for the most part were taken by stealth, and were compiled from the information of listeners and the under-officers and door-keepers of either house; but Cave had an interest

engines for extinguishing fires, had obtained a patent for one in particular which conjoined in one and the same machine the active powers of both the hands and feet: an ignorant and impudent pretender invaded his right, and the more to exasperate him, wrote with his own hand and subscribed a letter to Mr. Newsham, made up of the foulest abuse and a discussion of the principles of mechanics in language, which for its nonsense and bad spelling conveyed no ideas. Mr. Newsham printed and dispersed some thousand copies verbatim et literatim of this letter, and without a single remark thereon sunk the reputation of his adversary so low as ever after to be irretrievable.

with

with some of the members of both, arising from an employment he held in the post-office, that of inspector of the franks, which not only gave him the privilege of sending his letters free of postage, but an acquaintance with, and occasions of access to many of them.

Of this advantage he was too good a judge of his own interest not to avail himself. He therefore determined to gratify his readers with as much of this kind of intelligence as he could procure and it was safe to communicate: his resolution was to frequent the two houses whenever an important debate was likely to come on, and from such expressions and particulars in the course thereof as could be collected and retained in memory, to give the arguments on either side. This resolution he put into practice in July 1736. His method of proceeding is variously reported; but I have been informed by some who were much about him, that taking with him a friend or two, he found means to procure for them and himself admission into the gallery of the house of commons, or to some concealed station in the other, and that then they privately took down notes of the several speeches, and the general tendency and substance of the arguments. Thus furnished, Cave and his associates would adjourn to a neighbouring tavern, and compare and adjust their notes, by means whereof and the help of their memories, they became enabled to fix at least the substance of what they had so lately heard and remarked.

The reducing this crude matter into form, was the work of a future day and of an abler hand, viz. Guthrie, the historian, a writer for the booksellers, whom Cave retained for the purpose: the speeches thus composed were given monthly to the public,
and

and perused and read with great eagerness; those who contemplated them thought they discovered in them not merely the political principles, but the style and manner of the speaker; the fact is, that there was little discrimination of the latter between the speeches of the best and the worst orators in either assembly, and in most instances the persons to whom they were ascribed were here made to speak with more eloquence and even propriety of diction than, in the place of debate they were able to do: Sir John Barnard, for instance, a man of no learning or reading, and who by the way had been bred a quaker, had a style little better than an ordinary mechanic, and which abounded with such phrases as, if so be—set case—and—nobody more so—and other such vulgarisms, yet was he made in the magazine to debate in language as correct and polished as that of Sir William Wyndham or Mr. Pulteney; though it must be confessed that so weighty was his matter on subjects of commerce, that Sir Robert Walpole, as I have been credibly informed, was used to say, that when he had answered Sir John Barnard, he looked upon that day's business in the house of commons to be as good as over.

The vigorous opposition to the minister, and the motion in both houses of the thirteenth of February, 1740-1 to remove him, were a new æra in politics; and, as the debates on that occasion were warmer than had ever then been known, the drawing them up required, in Cave's opinion, the pen of a more nervous writer than he who had hitherto conducted them. Johnson, who in his former publications in prose, had given no very favorable specimens of style, had by this time, by the study of the best of our old English writers,

writers, such as Sir Thomas More, Afcham, Hooker, Spenser, archbishop Sandys, Jewel, Chillingworth, Hales, of Eton, and others, formed a new one, consisting in original phrases and new combinations of the integral parts of sentences, which, with the infusion of words derived from the Latin and accommodated to our idiom, were such an improvement of the language as greatly tended to enrich it : Cave therefore thought him a fit person to conduct this part of his monthly publication, and, dismissing Guthrie, committed the care of it to Johnson.

Before this change of hands, Cave had been checked by some intimations from the clerks of the house of commons, that his printing the debates had given offence to the speaker, and might subject him to censure : this he, for some time, regarded but little, relying possibly upon the indulgence that had been shewn as well to the publishers of the Political State of Great Britain, who were the first that ventured on this practice, as to himself ; but a resolution of the house at length gave him to understand, that it would be prudence in him to desist from it. The thought of putting his readers on short allowance was very unpleasing to him, and this, with the apprehension that the sale of his Magazine might be affected by the omission of a kind of intelligence which they had been accustomed to, drove him to many contrivances to evade the prohibition, out of which he chose one that scarce any man but himself would have thought of : it was the giving to the public the debates in the British senate under a fictitious designation. Every one, he knew, was acquainted with Gulliver's Travels ; he therefore, in his magazine



for June 1738, begins the month by feigning, that the debates in the senate of Magna Lilliputia were then extant; and referring to the resolution of the house of commons, above-mentioned, whereby he was forbidden to insert any account of the proceedings of the British parliament, he pretends to doubt not but his readers will be pleased with the insertion of what he calls the appendix to captain Gulliver's account of Lilliput, in their room. A change of fictitious for real names of persons, countries, and provinces, was absolutely necessary for the carrying on this design, and accordingly, by transposing the letters and otherwise anagrammatizing proper names, he has, through the medium of nonsense, given light to that which he would be thought to conceal.

Farther to aid his reader as to the names of countries, &c. he published, at the end of his magazine for 1738, a fictitious proposal for printing, by subscription, a work, intitled, Anagrammata Rediviva, or the art of composing and resolving anagrams, with a reference to the bookfellers, agents, and masters of ships, in the cities, countries, and provinces therein described by barbarous names opposed to those which they are meant to signify: he also, at the end of the magazines for 1739, 1740, 1741, 1742, and 1743, gave a list of christian and surnames pretendedly synonymous, forming thereby a key to that otherwise unintelligible jargon which Cave, by this subterfuge, had introduced into the debates.

The proprietors of the London Magazine, who also gave the debates, but from documents less authentic than those of Cave, compelled by the same necessity that

that forced him to this artifice, took another course : they feigned to give the debates in the Roman senate, and by adapting Roman names to the several speeches, rendered them more plausible than they appear under Cave's management.

The artifice however succeeded in both instances : the resolution of the commons was never enforced, and the debates were published with impunity. I will not disgrace my page by the insertion of any of those barbarous appellations which Cave had invented, and which, I dare say, were music to his ear ; but content myself with saying, that Guthrie acquiesced in Cave's fiction and the nonsense which it involved, and as it was found to answer its end, Johnson scrupled not to adopt it.

The debates penned by Johnson were not only more methodical and better connected than those of Guthrie, but in all the ornaments of stile superior : they were written at those seasons when he was able to raise his imagination to such a pitch of fervour as bordered upon enthusiasm, which, that he might the better do, his practice was to shut himself up in a room assigned him at St. John's gate, to which he would not suffer any one to approach, except the compositor or Cave's boy for matter, which, as fast as he composed it, he tumbled out at the door.

Never were the force of reasoning or the powers of popular eloquence more evidently displayed, or the arts of sophistry more clearly detected than in these animated compositions. Nor are they more worthy of admiration for these their excellencies than for that peculiarity of language which discriminates

the debates of each assembly from the other, and the various colouring which he has found the art of giving to particular speeches. The characteristic of the one assembly we know is Dignity; the privilege of the other Freedom of Expression. To speak of the first, when a member thereof endowed with wisdom, gravity, and experience, is made to rise, the style which Johnson gives him is nervous, his matter weighty, and his arguments convincing; and when a mere popular orator takes up a debate, his eloquence is by him represented in a glare of false rhetoric, specious reasoning, an affectation of wit, and a disposition to trifle with subjects the most interesting. With great judgment also does Johnson adopt the unrestrained oratory of the other house, and with equal facility imitate the deep-mouthed rancour of Pulteney, and the yelping pertinacity of Pitt.

As an illustration of the former part of this position, I shall here give two speeches, the one of the lord-chancellor Hardwicke on the motion of lord Carteret for an address to his Majesty, beseeching him to remove Sir Robert Walpole from his presence and councils for ever; and the other of lord Chesterfield on a bill, intitled ‘An act for repealing certain
‘ duties on spirituous liquors, and on licences for
‘ retailing the same, and for laying other duties on
‘ spirituous liquors and on licenses for retailing the
‘ said liquors.’ That of lord Hardwicke is as follows:

‘ My Lords,

‘ My Lords,

‘ Though I very readily admit that crimes ought
 ‘ to be punished, that a treacherous administration
 ‘ of public affairs is in a very high degree criminal,
 ‘ that even ignorance, where it is the consequence of
 ‘ neglect, deserves the severest animadversion, and
 ‘ that it is the privilege and duty of this house to
 ‘ watch over the state of the nation, and inform his
 ‘ Majesty of any errors committed by his ministers;
 ‘ yet I am far from being convinced either of the
 ‘ justice or necessity of the motion now under con-
 ‘ sideration.

‘ The most flagrant and invidious part of the charge
 ‘ against the right honourable gentleman appears to
 ‘ consist in this, that he has engrossed an exorbitant
 ‘ degree of power, and usurped an unlimited influence
 ‘ over the whole system of government, that he dis-
 ‘ poses of all honours and preferments, and that he is
 ‘ not only first but sole minister.

‘ But of this boundless usurpation, my lords, what
 ‘ proof has been laid before you? what beyond loud
 ‘ exaggerations, pompous rhetoric, and specious
 ‘ appeals to common fame? common fame which at
 ‘ least may sometimes err, and which though it may
 ‘ afford sufficient ground for suspicion and enquiry,
 ‘ was never yet admitted as conclusive evidence,
 ‘ where the immediate necessities of the public did
 ‘ not preclude the common forms of examination,
 ‘ where the power of the offender did not make it
 ‘ dangerous to attack him by a legal prosecution, or
 ‘ where the conduct of the accuser did not plainly

‘ discover that they were more eager of blood than of
 ‘ justice, and more sollicitous to destroy than to con-
 ‘ vict.

‘ I hope none of these circumstances, my lords,
 ‘ can at present obstruct a candid and deliberate en-
 ‘ quiry ; with regard to the public, I am not able to
 ‘ discover any pressing exigences that demand a more
 ‘ compendious method of proceeding than the estab-
 ‘ lished laws of the land and the wisdom of our
 ‘ ancestors have prescribed. I know not any calamity
 ‘ that will be aggravated, nor any danger that will
 ‘ become more formidable by suffering this question
 ‘ to be legally tried.

‘ Nor is there, my lords, in the circumstances of
 ‘ the person accused, any thing that can incite us to a
 ‘ hasty process, for if what is alledged by the noble
 ‘ lords is not exaggerated beyond the truth, if he is
 ‘ universally detested by the whole nation, and loaded
 ‘ with execrations by the public voice, if he is confi-
 ‘ dered as the author of all our miseries and the
 ‘ source of all our corruptions, if he has ruined our
 ‘ trade and depressed our power, impoverished the
 ‘ people and attempted to enslave them, there is at
 ‘ least no danger of an insurrection in his favour, or
 ‘ any probability that his party will grow stronger by
 ‘ delays. For, my lords, to find friends in adversity
 ‘ and assertors in distress, is only the prerogative of
 ‘ innocence and virtue.

‘ The gentleman against whom this formidable
 ‘ charge is drawn up, is, I think, not suspected of any
 ‘ intention to have recourse either to force or flight :
 ‘ he has always appeared willing to be tried by the
 ‘ laws of his country, and to stand an impartial ex-
 ‘ amination;

‘ amination; he neither opposes nor eludes enquiry,
 ‘ neither flies from justice nor defies it.

‘ And yet less, my lords, can I suspect, that those
 ‘ by whom he is accused act from any motive that may
 ‘ influence them to desire a sentence not supported by
 ‘ evidence or conformable to truth, or that they can
 ‘ wish the ruin of any man whose crimes are not no-
 ‘ torious and flagrant, that they persecute from pri-
 ‘ vate malice, or endeavour to exalt themselves by the
 ‘ fall of another.

‘ Let us therefore, my lords, enquire before we
 ‘ determine, and suffer evidence to precede our sen-
 ‘ tence. The charge, if it is just, must be by its own
 ‘ nature easily proved, and that no proof is brought
 ‘ may perhaps be sufficient to make us suspect that it
 ‘ is not just.

‘ For, my lords, what is the evidence of common
 ‘ fame, which has been so much exalted and so confi-
 ‘ dently produced? Does not every man see, that on
 ‘ such occasions two questions may be asked, of which
 ‘ perhaps neither can easily be answered, and which yet
 ‘ must both be resolved before common fame can be
 ‘ admitted as a proof of facts?

‘ It is first to be enquired, my lords, whether the
 ‘ reports of fame are necessarily or even probably true.
 ‘ A question very intricate and diffusive, entangled
 ‘ with a thousand and involving a thousand distincti-
 ‘ ons:—a question, of which it may be said, that a
 ‘ man may very plausibly maintain either side, and of
 ‘ which, perhaps, after months or years wasted in dis-
 ‘ putation, no other decision can be obtained than
 ‘ what is obvious at the first view, that they are
 ‘ often true and often false, and therefore can only

‘ be grounds of enquiry, not reasons of determination.

‘ But if it appear, my lords, that this oracle cannot be deceived, we are then to enquire after another difficulty, we are to enquire, What is fame?

‘ Is fame, my lords, that fame which cannot err, a report that flies on a sudden through a nation, of which no man can discover the original? a sudden blast of rumour that inflames or intimidates a people, and obtains, without authority, a general credit? No man versed in history can enquire whether such reports may not deceive. Is fame rather a settled opinion prevailing by degrees, and for some time established? How long then, my lords, and in what degree must it have been established to obtain undoubted credit? and when does it commence infallible? If the people are divided in their opinions, as in all public questions it has hitherto happened, fame is, I suppose, the voice of the majority. For if the two parties are equal in their numbers, fame will be equal, then how great must be the majority before it can lay claim to this powerful auxiliary? and how shall that majority be numbered?

‘ These questions, my lords, may be thought, perhaps with justice, too ludicrous in this place; but in my opinion they contribute to shew the precarious and uncertain nature of the evidence so much confided in.

‘ Common fame, my lords, is to every man only what he himself commonly hears, and it is in the power of any man’s acquaintance to vitiate the evidence which they report, and to stun him with clamours, and terrify him with apprehensions of miseries never felt, and dangers invisible.

‘ But

‘ But without such a combination, we are to remember
 ‘ that most men associate with those of their own opi-
 ‘ nions, and that the rank of those that compose this
 ‘ assembly naturally disposes such as are admitted to
 ‘ their company, to relate or to invent such reports as
 ‘ may be favourably received, so that what appears
 ‘ to one lord the general voice of common fame, may
 ‘ by another be thought only the murmur of a petty
 ‘ faction, despicable with regard to their numbers, and
 ‘ detestable if we consider their principles.

‘ So difficult is it, my lords, to form any solid judg-
 ‘ ment concerning the extent and prevalence of any
 ‘ particular report, and the degree of credit to be given
 ‘ to it. The industry of a party may supply the defect
 ‘ of numbers, and some concurrent circumstances may
 ‘ contribute to give credit to a false report.

‘ But, my lords, we are ourselves appealed to as
 ‘ witnesses of the truth of facts which prove him to be
 ‘ sole minister, of the number of his dependants, the
 ‘ advancement of his friends, the disappointments of
 ‘ his opponents, and the declarations made by his
 ‘ followers of adherence and fidelity.

‘ If it should be granted, my lords, that there is no-
 ‘ thing in these representations exaggerated beyond the
 ‘ truth, and that nothing is represented in an improper
 ‘ light, what consequence can we draw but that the fol-
 ‘ lowers of this gentleman make use of those arts which
 ‘ have always been practised by the candidates of pre-
 ‘ ferment; that they endeavour to gain their patron’s
 ‘ smile by flattery and panegyric, and to keep it by
 ‘ assiduity and an appearance of gratitude? And if
 ‘ such applications exalted any man to the authority
 ‘ and title of first minister, the nation has never, in my
 ‘ memory,

‘ memory, been without some man in that station, for
‘ there is always some one to whom ambition and
‘ avarice have paid their court, and whose regards
‘ have been purchased at the expence of truth.

‘ Nor is it to be wondered at, my lords, that posts
‘ of honour and profit have been bestowed upon
‘ the friends of the administration, for who enriches
‘ or exalts his enemies? Who will encrease the in-
‘ fluence that is to be exerted against him, or add
‘ strength to the blow that is levelled at himself?

‘ That the right honourable gentleman is the
‘ only disposer of honours has never yet appeared;
‘ it is not pretended, my lords, that he distributes
‘ them without the consent of his Majesty, nor even
‘ that his recommendation is absolutely necessary to
‘ the success of any man’s applications. If he has
‘ gained more of his Majesty’s confidence and esteem
‘ than any other of his servants, he has done only
‘ what every man endeavours, and what therefore is
‘ not to be imputed to him as a crime.

‘ It is impossible, my lords, that Kings like other
‘ men should not have particular motions of inclina-
‘ tion or dislike; it is possible that they may fix their
‘ affection upon objects not in the highest degree
‘ worthy of their regard, and overlook others that
‘ may boast of greater excellencies and more shining
‘ merit, but this is not to be supposed without proof,
‘ and the regard of the King as of any other man,
‘ is one argument of desert more than he can produce
‘ who has endeavoured after it without effect.

‘ This imputed usurpation must be proved upon
‘ him either by his own confession or by the evidence
‘ of others, and it has not yet been pretended that he
‘ assumes

‘ assumes the title of Prime Minister, or indeed that
 ‘ it is applied to him by any but his enemies, and it
 ‘ may easily be conceived how weakly the most un-
 ‘ corrupted innocence would be supported if all the
 ‘ aspersions of its enemies were to be received as proofs
 ‘ against it.

‘ Nor does it appear, my lords, that any other evi-
 ‘ dence can be brought against him on this head, or
 ‘ that any man will stand forth and affirm, that either
 ‘ he has been injured himself by this gentleman, or
 ‘ known any injury done by him to another by the
 ‘ exertion of authority with which he was not lawfully
 ‘ invested ; such evidence, my lords, the laws of our
 ‘ country require to be produced before any man can
 ‘ be punished, censured or disgraced. No man is
 ‘ obliged to prove his innocence, but may call upon
 ‘ his prosecutors to support their accusation, and
 ‘ why this honourable gentleman, whatever may have
 ‘ been his conduct, should be treated in a different
 ‘ manner than any other criminal, I am by no means
 ‘ able to discover.

‘ Though there has been no evidence offered of his
 ‘ guilt, your lordships have heard an attestation of
 ‘ his innocence from the noble Nardac * who spoke
 ‘ first against the motion, of whom it cannot be sus-
 ‘ pected that he would voluntarily engage to answer
 ‘ for measures which he pursued in blind compliance
 ‘ with the direction of another. The same testimo-
 ‘ ny, my lords, can I produce, and affirm with equal
 ‘ truth, that in the administration of my province
 ‘ I am independent, and left entirely to the decisions
 ‘ of my own judgment.

* Duke.

‘ In every government, my lords, as in every family,
‘ some, either by accident, or a natural industry, or a
‘ superior capacity, or some other cause, will be en-
‘ gaged in more business and treated with more con-
‘ fidence than others; but if every man is willing to
‘ answer for the conduct of his own province, there is
‘ all the security against corruption that can possibly
‘ be obtained; for if every man’s regard to his own
‘ safety and reputation will prevent him from betraying
‘ his trust or abusing his power, much more will it
‘ incite him to prevent any misconduct in another for
‘ which he must himself be accountable. Men are
‘ usually sufficiently tenacious of power, and ready to
‘ vindicate their separate rights, when nothing but their
‘ pride is affected by the usurpation, but surely no
‘ man will patiently suffer his province to be invaded,
‘ when he may himself be ruined by the conduct of
‘ the invader.

‘ Thus, my lords, it appears to me to be not only
‘ without proof, but without probability, and the first
‘ minister can, in my opinion, be nothing more than a
‘ formidable illusion, which, when one man thinks he
‘ has seen it, he shews to another as easily frightened as
‘ himself, who joins with him in propagating the no-
‘ tion, and in spreading terror and resentment over the
‘ nation, till at last the panic becomes general, and
‘ what was at first only whispered by malice or preju-
‘ dice in the ears of ignorance or credulity, is adopted
‘ by common fame, and echoed back from the people
‘ to the senate.

‘ I have hitherto, my lords, confined myself to the
‘ consideration of one single article of this complicated
‘ charge, because it appears to me to be the only part
‘ of

‘ of it necessary to be examined, for if once it be ac-
 ‘ knowledged that the affairs of the nation are transact-
 ‘ ed, not by the minister but the administration, by the
 ‘ council, in which every man who sits there has an
 ‘ equal voice and equal authority, the blame or praise
 ‘ of all the measures must be transferred from him to
 ‘ the council, and every man that has advised or con-
 ‘ curred in them, will deserve the same censure or the
 ‘ same applause ; as it is unjust to punish one man for
 ‘ the crimes of another, it is unjust to chuse one man
 ‘ out for punishment from among many others equally
 ‘ guilty.

‘ But I doubt not, my lords, when all those measures
 ‘ are equitably considered, there will be no punish-
 ‘ nishment to be dreaded, because neither negligence
 ‘ nor treachery will be discovered. For, my lords,
 ‘ with regard to the treaty of Vinena *, let us suppose
 ‘ our ministers deceived by ignorant or corrupt in-
 ‘ telligence ; let us admit that they were cautious
 ‘ where there was no danger, and neglected some op-
 ‘ portunities which, if they had received better infor-
 ‘ mation, they might have improved to the advantage
 ‘ and security of the nation : what have they done
 ‘ even under all these disadvantageous suppositions,
 ‘ but followed the lights which they judged most
 ‘ clear, and by which they hoped to be conducted to
 ‘ honour and to safety ?

‘ Policy, my lords, is very different from prescience,
 ‘ the utmost that can be attained is probability, and
 ‘ that, for the most part, in a low degree. It is ob-
 ‘ served that no man is wise, but as you take into
 ‘ consideration the weakness of another ; a maxim
 ‘ more eminently true of political wisdom, which

* Vienna.

‘ consists

‘ consists very often only in discovering designs which
‘ could never be known but by the folly or treachery
‘ of those to whom they are trusted. If our enemies
‘ were wise enough to keep their own secrets, neither
‘ our ministers nor our patriots would be able to know
‘ or prevent their designs, nor would it be any reproach
‘ to their sagacity that they did not know what nobody
‘ would tell them.

‘ If therefore, my lords, the princes whose interest
‘ is contrary to our own, have been at any time served
‘ by honest and wise men, there was a time when our
‘ ministers could act only by conjecture, and might
‘ be mistaken without a crime.

‘ If it was always in our power to penetrate into
‘ the intentions of our enemies, they must necessarily
‘ have the same means of making themselves acquaint-
‘ ed with our projects, and yet, when any of them are
‘ discovered, we think it just to impute it to the negli-
‘ gence of the minister.

‘ Thus, my lords, every man is inclined to judge
‘ with prejudice and partiality. When we suffer by
‘ the prudence of our enemies, we charge our ministers
‘ with want of vigilance, without considering that very
‘ often nothing is necessary to elude the most pene-
‘ trating sagacity but obstinate silence.

‘ If we enquire into the transactions of past times,
‘ shall we find any man, however renowned for his abi-
‘ lities, not sometimes imposed upon by falsehoods, and
‘ sometimes betrayed by his own reasonings into mea-
‘ sures destructive of the purposes which he endeavoured
‘ to promote? There is no man of whose penetration
‘ higher ideas have been justly formed, or who gave more
‘ frequent proofs of an uncommon penetration into fu-
‘ turity

‘ turity than Clewmro *, and yet succeeding times have
 ‘ sufficiently discovered the weakness of aggrandizing
 ‘ Blefuscu † by depressing Iberia ‡, and we wonder now
 ‘ how so much policy could fall into so gross an error,
 ‘ as not rather to suffer power to remain in the distant
 ‘ enemy, than transfer it to another equally divided
 ‘ from us by interest, and far more formidable by the
 ‘ situation of his dominions.

‘ Clewmro, my lords, suffered himself to be hur-
 ‘ ried away by the near prospect of present advantages,
 ‘ and the apprehension of present dangers, and every
 ‘ other man has been in the same manner sometimes
 ‘ deluded into a preference of smaller present advan-
 ‘ tage to a greater which was more remote.

‘ Let it not be urged, my lords, that politics are
 ‘ advanced since the time of Clewmro, and that errors
 ‘ which might then be committed by the wisest ad-
 ‘ ministration, are now gross and reproachful: we are
 ‘ to remember that every part of policy has been
 ‘ equally improved, and that, if more methods of
 ‘ discovery have been struck out, there have been
 ‘ likewise more arts invented of eluding it.

‘ When therefore we enquire into the conduct, or ex-
 ‘ amine the abilities of a minister, we are not to expect
 ‘ that he should appear never to have been deceived,
 ‘ but that he should never be found to have neglected
 ‘ any proper means of information, nor ever to have
 ‘ willingly given up the interest of his country; but
 ‘ we are not to impute to his weakness what is only
 ‘ to be ascribed to the wisdom of those whom he
 ‘ opposed.

‘ If this plea, my lords, is reasonable, it will be

* Cromwell. † France. ‡ Spain.

‘ necessary for those who support the motion, to prove,
 ‘ not only that the treaty of Vinena was never made,
 ‘ but that the falshood of the report either was or
 ‘ might have been known by our ministers, otherwise
 ‘ those who are inclined to retain a favourable opinion
 ‘ of their integrity and abilities, may conclude, that
 ‘ they were either not mistaken, or were led into error
 ‘ by such delusions as would no less easily have impos-
 ‘ ed on their accusers, and that by exalting their ene-
 ‘ mies to their stations they shall not much consult the
 ‘ advantage of their country.

‘ This motion therefore, my lords, founded upon
 ‘ no acknowledged, no indisputable facts, nor support-
 ‘ ed by legal evidence, this motion, which by appeal-
 ‘ ing to common fame as the ultimate judge of every
 ‘ man’s actions, may bring every man’s life or fortune
 ‘ into danger, this motion, which condemns without
 ‘ hearing and decides without examining, I cannot
 ‘ but reject, and hope your lordships will concur
 ‘ with me *.

This nervous speech was occasioned by one of the
 earl of Abingdon in support of the motion, which he
 grounded on the evidence of common fame. The
 drift of lord Hardwicke’s speech is to invalidate that
 kind of testimony, and in this he displays the talents
 of a sound lawyer and an eloquent orator; but the
 private virtues of Sir Robert Walpole were such, that
 few of his enemies wished for a greater punishment on
 him than the divesting him of power, and accordingly
 the motion contained no specific charge of crimes that
 called for public justice: it tended to shew that the
 minister had been inattentive to the complaints of the

* Gent. Mag. 1741, page 402.

merchants, averse to the prosecution of the war, and unskilful in the conduct of it, and that the councils of the nation had not prospered under his influence, and that these facts were notorious: these were surely reasons for his removal, and superseded the necessity of legal forms, and that kind of evidence which is required to support a bill of attainder or an impeachment. Lord Hardwicke's argument may therefore seem fallacious, but it was admirably calculated to elude the charge; he wilfully mistook the design of the motion, and set himself to invalidate the kind of evidence on which it was grounded, and to shew its insufficiency to support a legal prosecution, and succeeding therein, his opponents thought their arguments refuted when in truth they were not.

The speech of Lord Chesterfield on a different subject, and against a measure of a succeeding, and, as it was pretended, a purer administration, is as follows.

‘ My Lords,

‘ The bill now under our consideration appears to
 ‘ me to deserve a much closer regard than seems to
 ‘ have been paid to it in the other house, through
 ‘ which it was hurried with the utmost precipitation,
 ‘ and where it passed almost without the formality of
 ‘ a debate; nor can I think that earnestness with which
 ‘ some lords seem inclined to press it forward here,
 ‘ consistent with the importance of the consequences
 ‘ which may be, with great reason, expected from it.

‘ It has been urged that where so great a number
 ‘ have formed expectations of a national benefit from
 ‘ any bill, so much deference at least is due to their
 ‘ judgment, as that the bill should be considered in a
 ‘ committee. This, my lords, I admit to be, in other
 ‘ cases, a just and reasonable demand, and will readily

' allow that the proposal, not only of a considerable
 ' number, but even of any single lord, ought to be fully
 ' examined and regularly debated, according to the
 ' usual forms of this assembly. But in the present case,
 ' my lords, and in all cases like the present, the de-
 ' mand is improper because it is useless, and it is
 ' useless because we can do now all that we can do
 ' hereafter in a committee. For the bill before us is
 ' a money-bill, which, according to the present opinion
 ' of the clinabs*, we have no right to amend, and
 ' which therefore we have no need of considering in a
 ' committee, since the event of all our deliberations must
 ' be, that we are either to reject or pass it in its present
 ' state; for I suppose no lord will think this a proper
 ' time to enter into a controversy with the clinabs
 ' for the revival of those privileges to which, I be-
 ' lieve, we have a right, and such a controversy, the
 ' least attempt to amend a money-bill will certainly
 ' produce.

' To desire, therefore, my lords, that this bill may
 ' be considered in a committee, is only to desire that
 ' it may gain one step without opposition, that it may
 ' proceed through the forms of the house by stealth,
 ' and that the consideration of it may be delayed till
 ' the exigencies of the government shall be so great,
 ' as not to allow time for raising the supplies by any
 ' other method.

' By this artifice, gross as it is, the patrons of this
 ' wonderful bill hope to obstruct a plain and open
 ' detection of its tendency. They hope, my lords,
 ' that the bill shall operate in the same manner with
 ' the liquor which it is intended to bring into more
 ' general use; and that as those that drink spirits are

* Commons.

wells

1 drunk

‘ drunk before they are well aware that they are
 ‘ drinking, the effects of this law shall be perceived,
 ‘ before we know that we have made it. Their intent
 ‘ is to give us a dram of policy which is to be swal-
 ‘ lowed before it is tasted, and which, when once it is
 ‘ swallowed, will turn our heads.

‘ But, my lords, I hope we shall be so cautious as
 ‘ to examine the draught which these state-em-
 ‘ pirics have thought proper to offer us, and I am
 ‘ confident that a very little examination will con-
 ‘ vince us of the pernicious qualities of their new
 ‘ preparation, and shew that it can have no other effect
 ‘ than that of poisoning the public.

‘ The law before us, my lords, seems to be the
 ‘ effect of that practice of which it is intended like-
 ‘ wise to be the cause, and to be dictated by the
 ‘ liquor of which it so effectually promotes the use,
 ‘ for surely it never before was conceived by any man
 ‘ intrusted with the administration of public affairs, to
 ‘ raise taxes by the destruction of the people.

‘ Nothing, my lords, but the destruction of all the
 ‘ most laborious and useful part of the nation, can be
 ‘ expected from the license which is now proposed to
 ‘ be given, not only to drunkenness, but to drunken-
 ‘ ness of the most detestable and dangerous kind, to
 ‘ the abuse not only of intoxicating but of poisonous
 ‘ liquors.

‘ Nothing, my lords, is more absurd than to assert,
 ‘ that the use of spirits will be hindered by the bill now
 ‘ before us, or indeed that it will not be in a very
 ‘ great degree promoted by it. For what produces
 ‘ all kind of wickedness but the prospect of impunity
 ‘ on one part, or the solicitation of opportunity on

‘ the other ? Either of these have too frequently been
‘ sufficient to overpower the sense of morality, and
‘ even of religion, and what is not to be feared from
‘ them when they shall unite their force, and operate
‘ together, when temptations shall be increased and
‘ terror taken away ?

‘ It is allowed by those who have hitherto disputed
‘ on either side of this question, that the people ap-
‘ pear obstinately enamoured of this new liquor : it
‘ is allowed, on both parts, that this liquor corrupts
‘ the mind and enervates the body, and destroys vi-
‘ gour and virtue, at the same time that it makes those
‘ who drink it too idle and too feeble for work, and
‘ while it impoverishes them by the present expence,
‘ disables them from retrieving its ill consequences
‘ by subsequent industry.

‘ It might be imagined, my lords, that those who
‘ had thus far agreed, would not easily find any oc-
‘ casion of dispute, nor would any man, unacquainted
‘ with the motives by which senatorial debates
‘ are too often influenced, suspect, that after the per-
‘ nicious qualities of this liquor, and the general
‘ inclination among the people to the immoderate
‘ use of it had been generally admitted, it could be
‘ afterwards enquired, whether it ought to be made
‘ more common, whether this universal thirst for
‘ poison ought to be encouraged by the legislature,
‘ and whether a new statute ought to be made to
‘ secure drunkards in the gratification of their ap-
‘ petites.

‘ To pretend, my lords, that the design of this bill
‘ is to prevent or diminish the use of spirits, is to
‘ trample

‘ trample upon common sense, and to violate the
 ‘ rules of decency as well as of reason. For when
 ‘ did any man hear that a commodity was prohibited
 ‘ by licensing its sale, or that to offer and refuse is the
 ‘ same action.

‘ It is indeed pleaded that it will be made dearer by
 ‘ the tax which is proposed, and that the increase of the
 ‘ price will diminish the numbers of the purchasers, but
 ‘ it is at the same time expected, that this tax shall
 ‘ supply the expence of a war on the Continent. It is
 ‘ asserted therefore, that the consumption of spirits
 ‘ will be hindered, and yet, that it will be such as may
 ‘ be expected to furnish, from a very small tax, a re-
 ‘ venue sufficient for the support of armies, for the
 ‘ re-establishment of the Auristan* family, and the re-
 ‘ pression of the attempts of Blefuscu †.

‘ Surely, my lords, these expectations are not very
 ‘ consistent, nor can it be imagined that they are both
 ‘ formed in the same head, though they may be ex-
 ‘ pressed by the same mouth. It is, however, some
 ‘ recommendation of a statesman, when, of his asser-
 ‘ tions, one can be found reasonable or true, and in
 ‘ this, praise cannot be denied to our present ministers ;
 ‘ for though it is undoubtedly false that this tax will
 ‘ lessen the consumption of spirits, it is certainly true
 ‘ that it will produce a very large revenue, a revenue
 ‘ that will not fail but with the people from whose
 ‘ debaucheries it arises.

‘ Our ministers will therefore have the same honour
 ‘ with their predecessors, of having given rise to a
 ‘ new fund, not indeed for the payment of our debts,

* Austrian.

† France.

‘ but for much more valuable purposes, for the
‘ exaltation of our hearts under oppression, for the ele-
‘ vation of our spirits amidst miscarriages and disap-
‘ pointments, and for the chearful support of those
‘ debts which we have lost hopes of paying. They
‘ are resolved, my lords, that the nation, which
‘ nothing can make wise, shall, while they are
‘ at its head, at least be merry, and since public
‘ happiness is the end of government, they seem
‘ to imagine that they shall deserve applause, by
‘ an expedient, which will enable every man to
‘ lay his cares asleep, to drown sorrow, and lose, in
‘ the delights of drunkenness, both the public miseries
‘ and his own.

‘ Surely, my lords, men of this unbounded bene-
‘ volence and this exalted genius, deserve such honours
‘ as were never paid before ; they deserve to bestride
‘ a butt upon every sign-post in the metropolis, or
‘ to have their countenances exhibited as tokens where
‘ this liquor is to be sold by the license which they
‘ have procured. They must be at least remembered
‘ to future ages as the happy politicians, who after
‘ all expedients for raising taxes had been employed,
‘ discovered a new method of draining the last
‘ reliques of the public wealth, and added a new reve-
‘ nue to the government ; nor will those who shall here-
‘ after enumerate the several funds now established
‘ among us, forget, among the benefactors to their
‘ country, the illustrious authors of the drinking
‘ fund.

‘ May I be allowed, my lords, to congratulate my
‘ countrymen and fellow-subjects upon the happy
‘ times which are now approaching, in which no
‘ man

‘ man will be disqualified for the privilege of being
 ‘ drunk ? when all discontent and disloyalty shall be
 ‘ forgotten, and the people, though now considered
 ‘ by the ministry as their enemies, shall acknowledge
 ‘ the lenity of that government under which all
 ‘ restraints are taken away.

‘ But to a bill for such desirable purposes, it would
 ‘ be proper, my lords, to prefix a preamble in which
 ‘ the kindness of our intentions should be more fully
 ‘ explained, that the nation may not mistake our
 ‘ indulgence for cruelty, nor consider their bene-
 ‘ nefactors as their persecutors. If therefore this bill
 ‘ be considered and amended, (for why else should it
 ‘ be considered ?) in a committee, I shall humbly
 ‘ propose that it shall be introduced in this manner :
 ‘ Whereas the designs of the present ministry, what-
 ‘ ever they are, cannot be executed without a great
 ‘ number of mercenaries, which mercenaries cannot
 ‘ be hired without money ; and whereas the present
 ‘ disposition of this nation to drunkenness, inclines us
 ‘ to believe, that they will pay more chearfully for
 ‘ the undisturbed enjoyment of distilled liquors, than
 ‘ for any other concession that can be made by the
 ‘ government ; be it enacted by the King’s most ex-
 ‘ cellent Majesty, that no man shall hereafter be denied
 ‘ the right of being drunk on the following condi-
 ‘ tions.

‘ This, my lords, to trifle no longer, is the proper
 ‘ preamble to this bill, which contains only the con-
 ‘ ditions on which the people of this kingdom are to
 ‘ be allowed henceforward to riot in debauchery, in de-
 ‘ bauchery licensed by law, and countenanced by the
 ‘ magistrates, for there is no doubt but those on whom

‘ the inventors of this tax shall confer authority, will
‘ be directed to assist their masters in their design, to
‘ encourage the consumption of that liquor from
‘ which such large revenues are expected, and to mul-
‘ tiply, without end, those licenses which are to pay
‘ an yearly tribute to the crown.

‘ By this unbounded license, my lords, that price
‘ will be lessened, from the increase of which the ex-
‘ pectations of the efficacy of this law are pretended,
‘ for the number of retailers will lessen the value as
‘ in all other cases, and lessen it more than this tax
‘ will increase it. Besides, it is to be considered, that
‘ at present the retailer expects to be paid for the
‘ danger which he incurs by an unlawful trade, and
‘ will not trust his reputation or his purse to the mercy
‘ of his customer, without a profit proportioned to
‘ the hazard; but when once the restraint shall be
‘ taken away, he will sell for common gain, and it
‘ can hardly be imagined, that at present he subjects
‘ himself to informations and penalties for less than
‘ six-pence a gallon.

‘ The specious pretence on which this bill is founded,
‘ and indeed the only pretence that deserves to be
‘ termed specious, is the propriety of taxing vice;
‘ but this maxim of government has, on this occasion,
‘ been either mistaken or perverted. Vice, my lords,
‘ is not, properly, to be taxed but suppressed, and
‘ heavy taxes are sometimes the only means by which
‘ that suppression can be attained. Luxury, my
‘ lords, or the excess of that which is pernicious only
‘ by its excess, may very properly be taxed, that such
‘ excess, though not strictly unlawful, may be made
‘ more difficult; but the use of those things which
‘ are

‘ are simply hurtful, hurtful in their own nature and
 ‘ in every degree, is to be prohibited. None, my
 ‘ lords, ever heard in any nation of a tax upon theft or
 ‘ adultery, because a tax implies a license granted for
 ‘ the use of that which is taxed, to all who shall be
 ‘ willing to pay it.

‘ Drunkenness, my lords, is universally, and in all
 ‘ circumstances an evil, and therefore ought not to be
 ‘ taxed, but punished, and the means of it not to be
 ‘ made easy by a slight impost which none can feel,
 ‘ but to be removed out of the reach of the people,
 ‘ and secured by the heaviest taxes levied with the
 ‘ utmost rigour. I hope those to whose care the
 ‘ religion of the nation is particularly consigned, will
 ‘ unanimously join with me in maintaining the ne-
 ‘ cessity not of taxing vice but suppressing it, and unite
 ‘ for the rejection of a bill, by which the future as
 ‘ well as the present happiness of thousands must be
 ‘ destroyed *.’

This speech is a contrast to that of lord Hardwicke, and to him who uttered it may be applied the character which bishop Burnet gives of Waller, viz.

‘ That he was only concerned to say that which should
 ‘ make him applauded ; he never laid the business of
 ‘ the house to heart, being a vain and empty, though
 ‘ a witty man.’

The subject of this important debate was a bill to restrain the use of spirituous liquors, founded on evidence that no less a quantity than seven millions of gallons thereof were yearly distilled and consumed in this country, and that in many parishes within the

* Gent. Mag. 1743, page 625.

bills of mortality, exclusive of London and Southwark, every sixth house retailed them. The bill, under the influence of the duke of Newcastle, lord Carteret, Mr. Sandys and others, the then ministry, passed the commons with little or no opposition, and money was immediately raised on the tax thereby imposed. In the house of lords it was vehemently opposed by the bishops and many of the lay lords, with great force of reasoning, and by lord Chesterfield in the above speech, which has little of argument in it, though it goes to prove, that the practice ought to have been suppressed rather than tolerated. It however passed, and notwithstanding the subsequent laws since made to palliate it, the evil to a great degree subsists at this day.

In the perusal of these debates, as written, we cannot but wonder at the powers that produced them. The author had never passed those gradations that lead to the knowledge of men and business: born to a narrow fortune, of no profession, conversant chiefly with books, and, if we believe some, so deficient in the formalities of discourse, and the practices of ceremony, as in conversation to be scarce tolerable; unacquainted with the stile of any other than academical disputation, and so great a stranger to senatorial manners, that he never was within the walls of either house of parliament. That a man, under these disadvantages, should be able to frame a system of debate, to compose speeches of such excellence, both in matter and form, as scarcely to be equalled by those of the most able and experienced statesmen, is, I say, matter of astonishment, and a proof of talents that qualified him for a speaker in the most august assembly on earth.

Cave,

Cave, who had no idea of the powers of eloquence over the human mind, became sensible of its effects in the profits it brought him : he had long thought that the success of his Magazine proceeded from those parts of it that were conducted by himself, which were the abridgement of weekly papers written against the ministry, such as the Craftsman, Fog's Journal, Common Sense, the Weekly Miscellany, the Westminster Journal, and others, and also marshalling the pastorals, the elegies, and the songs, the epigrams, and the rebuses that were sent him by various correspondents, and was scarcely able to see the causes that at this time increased the sale of his pamphlet from ten to fifteen thousand copies a month. But if he saw not, he felt them, and manifested his good fortune by buying an old coach and a pair of older horses ; and, that he might avoid the suspicion of pride in setting up an equipage, he displayed to the world the source of his affluence, by a representation of St. John's gate, instead of his arms, on the door-pannel. This he told me himself was the reason of distinguishing his carriage from others, by what some might think a whimsical device, and also for causing it to be engraven on all his plate.

Johnson had his reward, over and above the pecuniary recompence vouchsafed him by Cave, in the general applause of his labours, which the increased demand for the Magazine implied ; but this, as his performances fell short of his powers, gratified him but little ; on the contrary, he disapproved the deceit he was compelled to practice ; his notions of morality were so strict, that he would scarcely allow the violation of truth in the most trivial instances, and saw, in falsehood
of

of all kinds, a turpitude that he could never be thoroughly reconciled to: and though the fraud was perhaps not greater than the fictitious relations in Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, lord Bacon's *Nova Atlantis*, and bishop Hall's *Mundus alter et idem*, Johnson was not easy till he had disclosed the deception.

In the mean time it was curious to observe how the deceit operated. It has above been remarked, that Johnson had the art to give different colours to the several speeches, so that some appear to be declamatory and energetic, resembling the orations of Demosthenes; others like those of Cicero, calm, persuasive; others, more particularly those attributed to such country-gentlemen, merchants, and seamen as had seats in parliament, bear the characteristic of plainness, bluntness, and an affected honesty as opposed to the plausibility of such as were understood or suspected to be courtiers: the artifice had its effect; Voltaire was betrayed by it into a declaration, that the eloquence of ancient Greece and Rome was revived in the British senate, and a speech of the late earl of Chatham when Mr. Pitt, in opposition to one of Mr. Horatio Walpole, received the highest applause, and was by all that read it taken for genuine; * and we are further told

* The speech here alluded to, taking it to have been spoken as it is printed, was uttered in a debate on a bill for the encouragement and encrease of seamen, containing a clause for a register of seamen, and was intended to take away the necessity of impressing for the sea-service, which bill, as being a ministerial measure, was vehemently opposed. It is a reply, void of argument and loaded with abuse, to a sober reproof of a grave and experienced senator. To judge of its merits, and as a specimen of the speaker's method of debating at that early period of his life, it is necessary to compare it with that
to

told of a person in a high office under the government,
 who being at breakfast at a gentleman's chambers in
 Gray's inn,

to which it pretends to be an answer, and for that purpose both
 are here inserted, and first that of Mr. Walpole.

‘ SIR,

‘ I was unwilling to interrupt the course of this debate while
 ‘ it was carried on with calmness and decency by men who do not
 ‘ suffer the ardour of opposition to cloud their reason, or transport
 ‘ them to such expressions as the dignity of this assembly does not
 ‘ admit. I have hitherto deferred to answer the gentleman who
 ‘ declaimed against the bill with such fluency of rhetoric, and such
 ‘ vehemence of gesture, who charged the advocates for the ex-
 ‘ pedients now proposed, with having no regard to any interest but
 ‘ their own, and with making laws only to consume paper, and
 ‘ threatened them with the defection of their adherents, and the
 ‘ loss of their influence, upon this new discovery of their folly and
 ‘ their ignorance.

‘ Nor, Sir, do I now answer him for any other purpose than to
 ‘ remind him how little the clamours of rage, and petulancy of
 ‘ invectives contribute to the purposes for which this assembly is
 ‘ called together; how little the discovery of truth is promoted,
 ‘ and the security of the nation established by pompous diction and
 ‘ theatrical emotions.

‘ Formidable sounds and furious declamations, confident asser-
 ‘ tions, and lofty periods, may affect the young and unexperienced,
 ‘ and perhaps the gentleman may have contracted his habits of
 ‘ oratory by conversing more with those of his own age than
 ‘ with such as have had more opportunities of acquiring know-
 ‘ ledge, and more successful methods of communicating their
 ‘ sentiments.

‘ If the heat of his temper, Sir, would suffer him to attend
 ‘ to those whose age and long acquaintance with business give
 ‘ them an indisputable right to deference and superiority, he
 ‘ would learn, in time, to reason rather than declaim, and
 ‘ to prefer justness of argument, and an accurate knowledge of
 ‘ facts,

Gray's inn, Johnson being also there, declared, that by the style alone of the speeches in the debates, he could

‘ facts, to founding epithets and splendid superlatives, which
 ‘ may disturb the imagination for a moment, but leave no lasting
 ‘ impression on the mind.

‘ He will learn, Sir, that to accuse and prove are very different,
 ‘ and that reproaches, unsupported by evidence, affect only the
 ‘ character of him that utters them. Excursions of fancy and
 ‘ flights of oratory are indeed pardonable in young men, but in
 ‘ no other, and it would surely contribute more, even to the pur-
 ‘ pose for which some gentlemen appear to speak, that of depre-
 ‘ ciating the conduct of the administration, to prove the incon-
 ‘ veniences and injustice of this bill, than barely to assert them,
 ‘ with whatever magnificence of language or appearance of zeal,
 ‘ honesty or compassion.’

To this sober and temperate speech uttered by a grave senator, who had served his country in various capacities, and whose moral character was irreproachable, the following was the answer of Mr. William Pitt :

‘ SIR,

‘ The atrocious crime of being a young man, which the
 ‘ honourable gentleman has with such spirit and decency charged
 ‘ upon me, I shall neither attempt to palliate nor deny, but con-
 ‘ tent myself with wishing, that I may be one of those whose
 ‘ follies may cease with their youth, and not of that number who
 ‘ are ignorant in spite of experience.

‘ Whether youth can be imputed to any man as a reproach, I
 ‘ will not, Sir, assume the province of determining ; but surely
 ‘ age may become justly contemptible, if the opportunities which
 ‘ it brings have passed away without improvement, and vice appears
 ‘ to prevail when the passions have subsided. The wretch that,
 ‘ after having seen the consequences of a thousand errors, con-
 ‘ tinues still to blunder, and whose age has only added obstinacy
 ‘ to stupidity, is surely the object of either abhorrence or con-
 ‘ tempt, and deserves not that his grey head should secure him
 ‘ from insults.

‘ Much

could severally assign them to the persons by whom they were delivered. Johnson upon hearing this, could not

‘ Much more, Sir, is he to be abhorred, who, as he has advanced in age, has receded from virtue, and becomes more wicked with less temptation, who prostitutes himself for money which he cannot enjoy, and spends the remains of his life in the ruin of his country.

‘ But youth, Sir, is not my only crime ; I have been accused of acting a theatrical part. A theatrical part may either imply some peculiarities of gesture, or a dissimulation of my real sentiments, and an adoption of the opinions and language of another man.

‘ In the first sense, Sir, the charge is too trifling to be confuted, and deserves only to be mentioned that it may be despised. I am at liberty, like every other man, to use my own language ; and though I may perhaps have some ambition to please this gentleman, I shall not lay myself under any restraint, nor very solicitously copy his diction or his mien, however matured by age, or modelled by experience.

‘ If any man shall, by charging me with theatrical behaviour, imply, that I utter any sentiments but my own, I shall treat him as a calumniator and a villain, nor shall any protection shelter him from the treatment which he deserves. I shall, on such an occasion, without scruple, trample upon all those forms with which wealth and dignity intrench themselves, nor shall any thing but age restrain my resentment. Age, which always brings one privilege, that of being insolent and supercilious without punishment.

‘ But with regard, Sir, to those whom I have offended, I am of opinion, that if I had acted a borrowed part, I should have avoided their censure ; the heat that offended them is the ardour of conviction, and that zeal for the service of my country, which neither hope nor fear shall influence me to suppress. I will not sit unconcerned while my liberty is invaded, nor look in silence upon public robbery. I will exert my endeavours, at whatever hazard, to repel the aggressor and drag the thief to justice, whoever may protect them in their villany, and who-

‘ ever

not refrain from undeceiving him, by confessing that himself was the author of them all.

It must be owned, that with respect to the general principles avowed in the speeches, and the sentiments therein contained, they agree with the characters of the persons to whom they are ascribed. Thus, to instance in those of the upper house, the speeches of the duke of Newcastle, the lords Carteret and Ilay, are calm, temperate and persuasive; those of the duke of Argyle and lord Talbot, furious and declamatory, and lord Chesterfield's and lord Hervey's florid but flimsy. In the other house the speeches may be thus characterised; the minister's mild and conciliatory, Mr. Pulte-

ever may partake of their plunder. And if the honourable gentleman—At these words Mr. Winnington rose up, and calling Mr. Pitt to order, made a short speech, to which Mr. Pitt made this answer:

‘ If this be to preserve order, there is no danger of indecency
‘ from the most licentious tongue, for what calumny can be more
‘ atrocious, or what reproach more severe, than that of speaking
‘ with regard to any thing but truth. Order may sometimes be
‘ broken by passion or inadvertency, but will hardly be re-established
‘ by monitors like this, who cannot govern his own passion, whilst
‘ he is restraining the impetuosity of others.

‘ Happy, Sir, would it be for mankind, if every one knew his own
‘ province; we should not then see the same man at once a criminal
‘ and a judge, nor would this gentleman assume the right of
‘ dictating to others, what he has not learned himself.

‘ That I may return in some degree the favour which he intends me, I will advise him never hereafter to exert himself
‘ on the subject of order, but, whenever he finds himself inclined
‘ to speak on such occasions, to remember how he has now succeeded, and condemn in silence, what his censures will never reform *.’

* Gent. Mag. 1741, page 568 et seqq.

ney's nervous, methodical and weighty, Mr. Shippen's blunt and dogmatical, Sir John Barnard's clear, especially on commercial subjects, Lyttelton's stiff and imitative of the Roman oratory, and Pitt's void of argument but rhapsodically and diffusively eloquent*. In other particulars the debates of Johnson are liable to the same objections, but in a greater degree, as those of Guthrie; the language of them is too good, and the style such as none of the persons to whom the speeches are assigned were able to discourse in.

The confession of Johnson above-mentioned, was the first that revealed the secret that the debates inserted in the Gentleman's Magazine were fictitious, and composed by himself. After that, he was free, and indeed industrious, in the communication of it, for being informed that Dr. Smollet was writing a history of England, and had brought it down to the last reign, he cautioned him not to rely on the debates as given in the Magazine, for that they were not authentic, but, excepting as to their general import, the work of his own imagination.

As the subjects of these debates are at this time become very little interesting, I shall not attempt, farther than I have already done, to embellish these memoirs by a selection of any of those nervous arguments, or eloquent passages with which they abound, and the rather as it is impossible in the relation of a conflict between two contending parties, to determine the merits of their several pretensions, or distinguish between

* Mr. Pitt professed himself to be no reasoner. In the meetings of his party to settle the method of conducting a debate, in opposition to the minister, he declined the enforcing particular charges of mal-administration, and always chose what he called the peroration.

specious, and sound reasoning. In the attempts to remove the minister, experience has however convinced us, that ambition and personal resentment were the motives that actuated his opponents, for neither when they attained to power did they manifest greater integrity, nor did they cease to practise those methods for the maintaining their influence over the public councils, which were imputed to him as criminal.

It is beside my purpose to enter into a formal defence of the administration of this servant of the public, or to attempt a detection of the arts that were practised to render him odious: I will nevertheless mention a few facts respecting him that have come to my own knowledge, and may serve to exculpate him, in some degree, from the charge of being an enemy to the constitution or the interests of this country.

When he first came into power, he found it his duty to undertake the arduous task of reconciling the people to the dominion of a prince born in a foreign country, and securing the succession to his descendants, and this he lived to see effected. War he hated as much as some of his successors did peace, and from a war with Spain he foresaw that no good could follow: the settlements abroad of that power are very remote, and in a climate destructive to Englishmen; so that what we were ever able to take from them we never could hold. The extension of empire was never his wish; but the encouragement of commerce and the improvement of the revenue, in both which subjects his skill was unrivalled, engrossed his attention. To effect the one, a greater number of laws in its favour were framed and passed

passed under his sanction, than had ever been enacted in any known period of equal duration with his ministry ; and to carry the other into practice, he projected a scheme for an extension of the excise, as the only means of putting a stop to the frauds of merchants and illicit traders, and making the receipts of that branch of the public income equal to what they were computed at. This scheme, it is true, subjected him to much obloquy, and he was necessitated to abandon it ; but in a succeeding administration it was partly carried into execution, at the express solicitation of the principal persons concerned in that article of trade which it was suggested would have been most affected had the scheme passed into a law : and afterwards the most popular minister that ever directed the councils of this country, scrupled not to declare in full senate, that if ever a time should arrive that was likely to render the project feasible, himself would recommend an extension of the excise-laws as a measure big with advantage to commerce, to the revenue, and to the general interests of the kingdom.

The question whether he was in principle an enemy to his country or not, will possibly be decided by the following fact, which the best authority warrants me in relating : When he was seized with the disorder that put a period to his days, and from its violence he had abandoned the hope of living much longer, he called one of his sons to him, gave him his blessing, and with tears in his eyes told him, that from intelligence he had obtained, he would assure him that within a twelvemonth's time the crown of England would be fought for upon English ground : the subsequent

rebellion in 1745, and the irruptions of the enemy beyond the borders of the north, verified this prediction.

As I shall have but little occasion to say more of the debates in parliament as they appear in the Magazine, I shall close the account above given of them with saying, that Johnson continued to write them till the passing the bill for restraining the sale of spirituous liquors, which was about the end of the year 1743. After that, they were written by Dr. Hawkesworth, and by him continued to about 1760, within which period the plan of the Magazine was enlarged by a review of new publications. In this, Mr. Owen Ruffhead was first employed, but he being, in about two years, invited to superintend a re-publication of the Statutes at large, the office of reviewer dropped into the hands of Dr. Hawkesworth, who, though he was thought to exercise it with some asperity, continued in it till about the year 1772, when he was employed to digest the papers of fundry late navigators, and to become the editor of that collection of voyages, which in the catalogues of booksellers is distinguished by his name.

About this time Johnson was solicited to undertake an employment of a kind very different from any he had ever been accustomed to: it was to compile a catalogue of books; a task, which at first view, seems to be not above the capacity of almost the lowest of literary artificers, but on a nearer was found to require the abilities of one of the highest. Osborne the bookseller, had ventured on the purchase of the earl of Oxford's library of printed books, at the price of 13000*l.* and meaning to dispose of them by sale
at

at his shop in the ordinary way, projected a catalogue thereof distributed into common-places, in five octavo volumes, which being sold for five shillings each, would pay itself, and circulate throughout the kingdom and also abroad.

It is probable that Osborne had consulted Maittaire, then one of the masters of Westminster school, and who had formerly assisted in making out the *Catalogus librorum manuscriptorum Angliæ & Hiberniæ*, on the subject of his intended catalogue, and that Maittaire might have furnished the general heads or classes under which the several books are arranged, a work of some labour, and that required no small stock of erudition. This at least is certain, that he drew up a Latin dedication of the whole to Lord Carteret, then secretary of state, and subscribed it with his name; but the under-workmen were, as I conjecture, first Oldys, and afterwards Johnson, who while he was engaged in so servile an employment resembled a lion in harness. The former of these persons was a natural son of Dr. Oldys, a civilian of some eminence, and subsisted by writing for the booksellers. Having a general knowledge of books, he had been long retained in the service of Edward earl of Oxford, and was therefore by Osborne thought a fit person for his purpose; but whether they disagreed, or that Oldys was hindered by the restraint of his person in the Fleet, a misfortune that he laboured under some time about that period, he desisted, after having proceeded to the end of the second volume. The third and fourth I conceive to be the work of Johnson*; the fifth is nothing more than a catalogue of Osborne's old stock. The

* At what part of the catalogue Oldys's labours ended and John-

The catalogue of the Harleian printed books, for of the manuscripts there is another in being, drawn up by an able hand, is of that kind which philologists call *Bibliothèque Raisonnée*, in which besides the title, and the colophon containing the place and year of publication, a description of each article is given, serving to shew both its intrinsic and extrinsic worth, the hands through which it has passed, and various other particulars that tend to recommend it. I will select a few examples of this kind from the third volume, and leave the reader to applaud the judgment of Osborne in appointing so able a man as Johnson to this laborious task, and the industry and perseverance of the latter in the performance of it.

‘ No. 412. The Antiquities of Stone-Henge on
 ‘ Salisbury plain restored by Inigo Jones, architect-
 ‘ general to the King, published by J. Webb,
 ‘ 1655.

‘ This book has its margins (sides, tops and
 ‘ bottoms, in many leaves) almost written
 ‘ throughout, with some of the strangest
 ‘ notes, perhaps, to be met with, no ways re-
 ‘ lating to the subject-matter, nor to one ano-

son’s begin I have no express authority for saying : It is related of Johnson, by a person who was very likely to know the fact, that he was employed by Osborne to make ‘ a catalogue of the Harleian
 ‘ Library,’ and if not to make such remarks on the books as are above inserted, an ordinary hand would have done as well ; but it required the learning of a scholar to furnish such intelligence as the catalogue contains. This is one of the facts on which I ground my assertion that Johnson worked on the catalogue : to discriminate between his notes and those of Oldys, is not easy ; as literary curiosities, and as a specimen of a great work, they nevertheless deserve attention.

' ther, except in one or two places. The book
 ' is inscribed by *J. Webb* to *Philip* earl of
 ' *Pembroke* and *Montgomery*, some time lord-
 ' chamberlain to King *Charles* I. and chancellor
 ' of *Oxford*. And it had been his own copy ;
 ' for the said earl has, in the next leaf, writ his
 ' own name, which is apparently the same
 ' hand with that in which all those marginal
 ' eruptions of his memory and imagination
 ' were written. Some following possessor, or
 ' reader of this book, discovering the said
 ' writing to be his lordship's, has written in
 ' the margin against his name " This *Philip*
 " earl of *Pembroke* and *Montgomery* was the
 " writer of these wild notes. *A. Wood* would
 " have less belied him in calling him a mad-
 " man, than in saying he was illiterate and
 " could not write his name." The notes
 ' are written in *Latin*, *French* and *English*, in
 ' prose and verse, containing truth, fiction,
 ' trifles, matters of useful intelligence, some
 ' enough to make you merry, others melan-
 ' choly. He seems to have been under the
 ' displeasure of *Cromwell* and his daughters.
 ' Of the former he says " *Ravilliac Cromuell*
 " is to be pulled a pieces with wild horses,
 " upon *London* streets, and then to be hanged,
 " drawn, &c. not decapited in jest." p. 31.
 ' In the same page where he has writ his name,
 ' he has these words : " If he be mad, as
 " my lady *Harwood* sais, (whose tongue is no
 " slander,) it is rather for wanting the 10000
 " pounds a year his father promised to give
 K 4 " him,

“ him, than that he thinks 6000 pounds a
 “ year too much for him to manage, with
 “ Wilton and Ramsbury; for he is very
 “ learnedly proud, and proudly learned.” In
 “ several places he has mentioned *Inigo Jones*,
 “ the King’s surveyor, affirming in one place,
 “ He had, for 20 years together, sixteen thou-
 “ sand pounds a year, for keeping the King’s
 “ houses in repair, and yet they lay worse
 “ than any house in *Turnball street*.” p. 3.
 “ But in one place he augments his salary
 “ very much, when he says, “ *Hinnico Jones*,
 “ alias *Iniquity Jones*, a justice of peace, and
 “ of the *Quorum*, i and *Custos Rotulorum*,
 “ hath for keeping the King’s houses in re-
 “ pair, *deux cens mil escu per an*, threescore
 “ thousand pounds sterling a year, i and well
 “ paid: He is fourscore years ould.” p. 34.
 “ &c. &c.”

“ No. 1168. *Glossarium Archaiologicum*, Authore
 “ *Henrico Spelmanno*, Equite — 1664.

“ Because it had been intimated as if the
 “ latter part of this famous work, now first
 “ published with the former, and makes it
 “ complete, was not that learned author’s own
 “ to whom it is ascribed, Dr. *Robert Brady*
 “ has satisfied the world of this particular in
 “ the following curious anecdote: “ The
 “ first part of the *Glossary*, to the letter N,
 “ was published in the year 1626, the whole
 “ being then finished and offered by Sir *Henry*
 “ *Spelman* to Mr. *Bill*, the King’s printer, for
 “ the value of five pounds in books only; but
 “ he

“ he refusing to give him that small rate for
 “ the copy, he ventured to print the first part
 “ of it at his own charge, and most of the
 “ books lay upon his hands until the latter
 “ end of the year 1637, when Mr. *Stephens*
 “ and Mr. *Meredith* (booksellers in St. Paul’s
 “ church-yard) took them off. The next year,
 “ viz. Sir *William Dugdale* being with Sir
 “ *Henry Spelman*, and telling him that many
 “ learned men were very desirous to see the
 “ remaining part of that work, Sir *Henry*
 “ then told him what is here related, and
 “ produced *both parts* of the *Glossary*, the first
 “ whereof was printed, and interleaved with
 “ blank leaves, as also was the second, which
 “ was in manuscript, wherein he had added and
 “ altered much. After his Majesty’s *restaura-*
 “ *tion*, the earl of *Clarendon*, then lord-chan-
 “ cellor, and Dr. *Skeldon*, then bishop of
 “ *London*, inquired of Sir *William Dugdale*
 “ what was become of the remaining part
 “ of the *Glossary*, or whether ever it was
 “ finished? He told them it was finished, and
 “ in the hands of Mr. *Charles Spelman*, grand-
 “ child to Sir *Henry*, and youngest son to Sir
 “ *John*. Whereupon they desired Sir *William*
 “ to move him to print it, which he did:
 “ but finding that the booksellers would give
 “ *nothing* for the copy, and that he was not
 “ able to print it at his own charge, and
 “ returning this answer to the lord chancellor
 “ and bishop of *London*, they contributed
 “ liberally themselves; and procuring many
 “ subscriptions

“ subscriptions to that purpose, desired Sir
 “ *William Dugdale* to receive the money, and
 “ deal with a printer to perform the work ;
 “ which he did, and caused it to be printed
 “ as he received it, all under the proper hand-
 “ writing of Sir *Henry Spelman*, without altera-
 “ tion or addition. And had it not been for
 “ the dreadful fire in *London*, wherein both
 “ the copy and the greatest part of the im-
 “ pression were consumed, it might at this
 “ day have been produced, to have confirm-
 “ ed what is here reported. For the truth
 “ whereof, Sir *William Dugdale*, a person of
 “ great learning, worth, and integrity, and now
 “ a living testimony, without exception, may
 “ be consulted if any man doubts what is here
 “ delivered. See *Animadversions upon a book*
 “ *called Jani Anglorum Facies Nova*, p. 96.
 “ annexed to an *Answer to a book written by*
 “ *William Petit, Esq;* 8vo. 1681.”

* No. 1528. *Missale Mixtum secundum Regulam*
 * *Beati Isidori dictum Mozarabes.* Toleti 1500.

* This is the scarcest book in the whole
 * *Harleian* collection. At the end of it are the
 * following words, which deserve to be insert-
 * ed here :

“ *Ad laudem omnipotentis Dei, nec non Vir-*
 “ *ginis Mariæ matris ejus, omnium sanctorum*
 “ *sanctarumq; expletum est missale mixtum*
 “ *secundum regulam beati Isidori dictum Moza-*
 “ *rabes: Maxima cum diligentia perlectum*
 “ *et emendatum, per reverendum in utroq; jure*
 “ *doctorem*

“ *doctorem dominum Alfonsum Ortiz canonicum*
 “ *Toletanum. Impressum in regal. civitate Toleti*
 “ *jussu reverendissimi in Christo Patris Domini*
 “ *D. Francisci Ximenii, ejusdem civitatis ar-*
 “ *chiepiscopi. Impensis nobilis Melchioris Gor-*
 “ *riccii Novariensis, per Magistrum Petrum*
 “ *Hagembach, Alemanum, anno salutis nostræ*
 “ *1500. Die 29^o mensis Januarii.*”

‘ This is supposed to be the ancient missal
 ‘ amended and purged by St. *Isidore*, arch-
 ‘ bishop of *Sevil*, and ordered by the council
 ‘ of *Toledo* to be used in all churches, every
 ‘ one of which, before that time, had a missal
 ‘ peculiar to itself. The *Moors* afterwards
 ‘ committing great ravages in *Spain*, destroy-
 ‘ ing the churches, and throwing every thing
 ‘ there, both civil and sacred, into confusion,
 ‘ all St. *Isidore’s* missals, excepting those in
 ‘ the city of *Toledo*, were lost. But those were
 ‘ preserved, even after the *Moors* had made
 ‘ themselves masters of that city; since they
 ‘ left six of the churches there to the *Christians*,
 ‘ and granted them the free exercise of their
 ‘ religion. *Alphonsus* the sixth, many ages
 ‘ afterwards, expelled the *Moors* from *Toledo*,
 ‘ and ordered the *Roman* missal to be used
 ‘ in those churches where St. *Isidore’s* missal
 ‘ had been in vogue, ever since the council
 ‘ above-mentioned. But the people of *Toledo*
 ‘ insisting that their missal was drawn up by
 ‘ the most ancient bishops, revised and cor-
 ‘ rected by St. *Isidore*, proved to be the best
 ‘ by

‘ by the great number of saints who had follow-
‘ ed it, and been preserved during the whole
‘ time of the *Moorish* government in *Spain*, he
‘ could not bring his project to bear without
‘ great difficulty. In short, the contest be-
‘ tween the *Roman* and *Toletan* missals came
‘ to that height, that, according to the genius
‘ of the age, it was decided by a single com-
‘ bat, wherein the champion of the *Toletan*
‘ missal proved victorious. But King *Alphonso*,
‘ say some of the *Spanish* writers, not being
‘ satisfied with this, which he considered as the
‘ effect of chance only, ordered a fast to be
‘ proclaimed, and a great fire to be then made,
‘ into which, after the King and people had
‘ prayed fervently to God for his assistance in
‘ this affair, both the missals were thrown,
‘ but the *Toletan* only escaped the violence of
‘ the flames. This, continue the same authors,
‘ made such an impression upon the King, that
‘ he permitted the citizens of *Toledo* to use their
‘ own missal in those churches that had been
‘ granted the *Christians* by the *Moors*. How-
‘ ever, the copies of this missal grew afterwards
‘ so scarce, that cardinal *Ximenes* found it ex-
‘ tremely difficult to meet with one of them,
‘ which induced him to order this impression,
‘ and to build a chapel, in which this service
‘ was chanted every day, as it had at first been
‘ by the antient *Christians*. But notwithstand-
‘ ing this, the copies of the *Toletan* missal
‘ are become now so exceeding rare, that it
‘ is

‘ is at present almost in as much danger of
 ‘ being buried in oblivion, as it was when
 ‘ committed to the press by cardinal *Ximenes*.

‘ No. 3517. All the workes of John Taylor the
 ‘ water poet, being sixty and three in number, collect-
 ‘ ed into one volume by the author, with fundry new
 ‘ additions; corrected, revised, and newly imprinted—
 ‘ 1630.

‘ These works consist of several pieces,
 ‘ partly serious, but mostly comical, in prose
 ‘ as well as verse, which the author had pub-
 ‘ lished from time to time in single pamphlets.
 ‘ He frankly owns himself no scholar, but
 ‘ being a man of good natural parts, of a ready
 ‘ and copious invention, and having travell-
 ‘ ed much, and seen company of all sorts, he
 ‘ has in many things made good use, especially
 ‘ in the satirical vein of his fancy and observa-
 ‘ tions. Several of the nobility, &c. encour-
 ‘ aged him, and to them he dedicates several
 ‘ of these tracts. There are also commenda-
 ‘ tory verses before many of them, by some
 ‘ ingenious writers. Among the pieces for
 ‘ which he was most noted, may be reckoned
 ‘ his *Whip of Pride*, the *Travels of Twelve*
 ‘ *Pence*, *Taylor’s Goose*, *Taylor’s Motto*, his
 ‘ *Chronicles in Verse*, the *Cormorant*, *Praise of*
 ‘ *Hempseed*, *Praise of Clean Linen*, the *Peace*
 ‘ *with France in praise of Archy*, several *Elegies*,
 ‘ &c. Among the prose pieces: *His Pennyless*
 ‘ *Pilgrimage from London to Edinburgh*, in
 ‘ which he travelled a mile underneath the
 ‘ sea. *The acts of Nich. Wood the Kentish*
 ‘ *Gormund.*

' Gormund: *His pieces upon Tho. Coriat the*
 ' *Odcumbian Traveller. Wit and Mirth, or*
 ' *Pleasant Jests, &c.* As to the author, he is
 ' said to have been a *Gloucestershire* man, and
 ' was bred a sailor; he was at the taking
 ' of *Cadiz* under the earl of *Essex*, in 1596,
 ' and at *Flores*, in the *Island-Voyage*, next year:
 ' he was besides in Germany, Bohemia, Scot-
 ' land, &c. He was many years collector for
 ' the lieutenant of the tower, of the wines
 ' which were his fee from all ships which
 ' brought them up the Thames; but was at
 ' last discharged because he would not pur-
 ' chase the place at more than it was worth.
 ' He calls himself the *King's Water-poet* and
 ' the *Queen's Water-man*, and did wear the
 ' badge of the royal arms. After the beheading
 ' of King Charles, he kept a public-house
 ' in *Phænix alley*, near *Long-acre*, and set up
 ' the *Mourning-Crown*, for his sign; but found
 ' it safer to take it down again and hang up
 ' his own head instead of it. It is said he
 ' died about the year 1654*.' Of

* Taylor, though illiterate, was a man of understanding, but
 a singular humourist. In his account of Wood the great eater,
 above-mentioned, he relates, that he was very near engaging him
 to eat at one time as much black pudding as would reach cross the
 Thames, at any place to be fixed on by Taylor himself, betwixt
 London and Richmond. Being a waterman by trade, he had a
 mortal hatred to coaches, and wrote a bitter but very diverting in-
 vective against them; and upon a suggestion that the watermen
 were starving for want of employment, preferred a petition to King
 James I. which was referred to certain commissioners, of whom Sir
 Francis Bacon was one, the object whereof was, to obtain a prohibi-
 tion of all playhouses but those on the bank side, that the greater
 part

Of this stupendous work the Harleian catalogue, it is difficult to give an idea, save by such extracts as those above, and others in Latin of a like kind. Prefixed to it is a Latin dedication to lord Carteret by Mr. Michael Maittaire, dated February 1742-3, and after that, a preface, doubtless drawn up by Johnson, beginning 'To solicit a subscription for a catalogue of books exposed to sale,' wherein with great learning and no less judgment, he points out the excellence and extent of the collection, urges those arguments which should induce men of learning to become purchasers, and anticipates whatever objections could be made to this uncommon species of catalogue, and the method of circulating it.

The several articles are distributed in the order of a common place, that does honour to Johnson and Maittaire, who are supposed to have been jointly the framers of it. Here follows a specimen of the subdivision of the first of the heads therein contained, viz. Theology.

Biblia Sacra Polyglotta.

Hebraica.

Græca.

Nov. Testamentum.

Biblia Vulgata.

Latina variorum Interpretum.

part of those who were desirous of seeing plays might be compelled to go by water. Taylor himself solicited this petition, and was prepared to oppose before the commissioners the reasons of the players, but the commission was dissolved before it came to a hearing.

Gallica.

Gallica.

Italica.

Hispanica, Germanica, &c.

Anglica.

in linguis Variis Hodiernis.

Psalteria.

Psalteria Metrica.

Concordantiæ & Lexica Biblica.

Comment. Biblicorum Scriptores.

Veterum.

Recentiorum.

Patres Græci & Scriptores Ecclesiastici.

Latini & Scriptores Ecclesiastici.

Concilia.

Conciliorum Compendia.]

Hist. Ecclesiast.

Vitæ Sanctorum & Theologorum.

Pontificum Rom.

Hist. Ord. Monastic.

Eccles. Orientalis.

Linguis Hodiernis conscripta.

Theologia Judaica.

Scholastica.

Ascetica.

Miscellanea.

Catecheses.

Controversiæ Theologicae.

Contra Judeos.

Græcorum Scripta contra Latinos.

Contra Eccles. Roman.

Scriptores pro Romana Ecclesia.

Libri de Jesuitarum Moribus.

Libri de Ritibus, Cæremoniis et Institutis Ecclesiæ.

De Ritibus Græcorum.

Liturgiæ Græcorum.

De Ritibus Rom. eccl. &c.

Liturgiæ.

Missalia Angliæ, sive ad usum Ecclesiæ Sarisburiensis.

Missalia Romana.

Missalia variarum Ecclesiarum.

Liturgiæ orientalium Ecclesiarum.

Breviaria.

Ritualia.

Processionalia.

Antiphonaria.

Litaniæ.

Ceremonialia & Pastoralia.

Officia Mariæ Virginis.

Horæ Romanæ.

Horæ Sarisburiensis.

Manualia.

Hymnorum libri.

Scriptores de Trinitate.

Theologia Gallica.

Scriptores de Ritibus Judaicis.

The catalogue having passed the press, turned out to be very voluminous, and being of a singular kind, Osborne hoped to be able to make the public pay for it ; to this end it was, that he directed Johnson to draw up the preface, giving an account of the contents of the library, and containing a variety of arguments to vindicate a solicitation for a subscription, that is to

say, a demand of five shillings for each volume of the catalogue, to defray the expence of printing it; the volume or volumes so purchased, to be taken in exchange for any book rated at the same value. This paper, of which a character has already been given, was, as I conjecture, a precursor to the catalogue, and was with great industry circulated throughout the kingdom. It answered its end; the catalogue was printed in five octavo volumes, the collectors and lovers of books bought it, and Osborne was reimbursed.

While the catalogue was compiling, Johnson was further employed by Osborne to select from the many thousand volumes of which the library consisted, all such small tracts and fugitive pieces as were of greatest value or were most scarce, with a view to the reprinting and publishing them under the title of the Harleian Miscellany. To recommend a subscription for printing the collection, proposals were published containing an account of the undertaking, and an enumeration of its contents, penned by Johnson with great art; which being very short, may itself be deemed a fugitive piece, and is therefore here inserted.

‘ It has been for a long time a very just complaint
‘ among the learned, that a multitude of valuable pro-
‘ ductions, published in small pamphlets, or in single
‘ sheets, are in a short time, too often by accidents or
‘ negligence, destroyed and entirely lost; and that
‘ those authors, whose reverence for the public has
‘ hindered them from swelling their works with repe-
‘ titions, or incumbering them with superfluities, and
‘ who, therefore, deserve the praise and gratitude of
‘ posterity,

' posterity, are forgotten, for the very reason for which
 ' they might expect to be remembered. It has been
 ' long lamented, that the duration of the monuments
 ' of genius and study, as well as of wealth and power,
 ' depends in no small measure on their bulk ; and that
 ' volumes, considerable only for their size, are handed
 ' down from one age to another, when compendious
 ' treatises, of far greater importance, are suffered to
 ' perish, as the compactest bodies sink into the water,
 ' while those of which the extension bears a greater
 ' proportion to the weight, float upon the surface.

' This observation hath been so often confirmed by
 ' experience, that, in the neighbouring nation, the
 ' common appellation of small performances is derived
 ' from this unfortunate circumstance ; a *flying sheet*, or a
 ' *fugitive piece*, are the terms by which they are distin-
 ' guished, and distinguished with too great propriety,
 ' as they are subject, after having amused mankind for
 ' a while, to take their flight and disappear for
 ' ever.

' What are the losses which the learned have already
 ' sustained, by having neglected to fix those fugitives
 ' in some certain residence, it is not easy to say ; but
 ' there is no doubt that many valuable observations
 ' have been repeated, because they were not preserved ;
 ' and that, therefore, the progress of knowledge has
 ' been retarded, by the necessity of doing what had
 ' been already done, but was done for those who forgot
 ' their benefactor.

' The obvious method of preventing these losses, of
 ' preserving to every man the reputation he has me-
 ' rited by long assiduity, is to unite these scattered

pieces into volumes, that those which are too small to preserve themselves, may be secured by their combination with others ; to consolidate these atoms of learning into systems, to collect these disunited rays, that their light and their fire may become perceptible.

Of encouraging this useful design, the studious and inquisitive have now an opportunity, which, perhaps, was never offered them before, and which, if it should now be lost, there is not any probability that they will ever recover. They may now conceive themselves in possession of the lake into which all those rivulets of science have for many years been flowing : but which, unless its waters are turned into proper channels, will soon burst its banks, or be dispersed in imperceptible exhalations.

In the Harleian library, which I have purchased, are treasured a greater number of pamphlets and small treatises, than were perhaps ever yet seen in one place ; productions of the writers of all parties, and of every age, from the reformation ; collected with an unbounded and unwearied curiosity, without exclusion of any subject.

So great is the variety, that it has been no small labour to peruse the titles, in order to reduce them to a rude division, and range their heaps under general heads ; of which the number, though not yet increased by the subdivision which an accurate survey will necessarily produce, cannot but excite the curiosity of all the studious, as there is scarcely any part of knowledge which some of these articles do not comprehend.

[Then

[Then follows an enumeration of articles to the amount of more than an hundred and fifty, which it is needless here to insert.]

‘ As many of these tracts must be obscure by
 ‘ length of time, or defective for want of those disco-
 ‘ veries which have been made since they were writ-
 ‘ ten, there will be added some historical, explanatory,
 ‘ or supplemental notes, in which the occasion of the
 ‘ treatise will be shewn, or an account given of the
 ‘ author, allusions to forgotten facts will be illustrat-
 ‘ ed, or the subject farther elucidated from other
 ‘ writers.’

We may well conclude that the proposal met with all due encouragement, as the pieces recommended in it were in the year 1749, published in eight quarto volumes. To the first of them was prefixed, as an introduction, an essay on the origin and importance of small tracts and fugitive pieces,

Osborne was an opulent tradesman, as may be judged from his ability to make so large a purchase as that above-mentioned; he was used to boast that he was worth forty thousand pounds, but of bookfellers he was one of the most ignorant; of title-pages or editions he had no knowledge or remembrance, but in all the tricks and arts of his trade he was most expert. Johnson, in his life of Pope says, that he was entirely destitute of shame, without sense of any disgrace, but that of poverty. He purchased a number of unfold copies of Mr. Pope's Iliad, of the folio size, printed on an inferior paper and without cuts, and cutting off the top and bottom margins, which were very large, had the impudence to call them the subscription books, and

to vend them as such *. His insolence to his customers was also frequently past bearing. If one came for a book in his catalogue, he would endeavour to force on him some new publication of his own, and, if he refused, would affront him.

I mention the above particulars of this worthless fellow as an introduction to a fact respecting his behaviour to Johnson, which I have often heard related, and which himself confessed to be true. Johnson, while employed in selecting pieces for the Harleian Miscellany, was necessitated, not only to peruse the title-page of each article, but frequently to examine its contents, in order to form a judgment of its worth and importance, in the doing whereof, it must be supposed, curiosity might sometimes detain him too long, and whenever it did, Osborne was offended. Seeing Johnson one day deeply engaged in perusing a book, and the work being for the instant at a stand, he reproached him with inattention and delay, in such coarse language as few men would use, and still fewer could brook: the other in his justification asserted somewhat, which Osborne answered by giving him the lie; Johnson's anger at so foul a charge, was not so great as to make him forget that he had weapons at hand: he seized a folio that lay near him, and with it felled his adversary to the ground, with some exclamation, which, as it is differently related, I will not venture to repeat.

This transaction, which has been seldom urged with any other view than to shew that Johnson was of

* See a note on the Dunciad, Book ii. verse 167, in the later editions.

an irascible temper, is generally related as an entertaining story : with me it has always been a subject of melancholy reflection. In our estimation of the enjoyments of this life, we place wisdom, virtue, and learning in the first class, and riches and other adventitious gifts of fortune in the last. The natural subordination of the one to the other we see and approve, and when that is disturbed we are sorry. How then must it affect a sensible mind to contemplate that misfortune, which could subject a man endued with a capacity for the highest offices, a philosopher, a poet, an orator, and, if fortune had so ordered, a chancellor, a prelate, a statesman, to the insolence of a mean, worthless, ignorant fellow, who had nothing to justify the superiority he exercised over a man so endowed, but those advantages which Providence indiscriminately dispenses to the worthy and the worthless ! to see such a man, for the supply of food and raiment, submitting to the commands of his inferior, and, as a hireling, looking up to him for the reward of his work, and receiving it accompanied with reproach and contumely, this, I say, is a subject of melancholy reflection.

Having completed the Harleian catalogue and miscellany, and thereby disengaged himself from Osborne, Johnson was at liberty to pursue some scheme of profit, less irksome than that in which he had so lately been employed. Biography was a kind of writing that he delighted in ; it called forth his powers of reflection, and gave him occasion to contemplate human life and manners. He had made some essays of his talent in the lives of Barretier and Boerhaave, men unknown to him, and was now prompted to give to the

world that of a friend with whom he had been closely intimate, whose singular character and adverse fortunes afforded ample scope for discussion, and furnished matter for many admirable lessons of morality.

This friend was Savage, of whom it has above been related, that his friends had undertaken to raise an annual subscription for his support at Swansea in Wales, but that his departure for that place was retarded by some difficulties that occurred in the course of their endeavours to raise it: these, however, were overcome, and Savage, in July 1739, took leave of London, and also of Johnson, who, as himself tells us, parted from him with tears in his eyes. His subsequent history is, that taking his way through Bristol, he was for some time detained there by an embargo on the shipping. After some stay he was enabled to depart, and he reached Swansea; but not liking the place, and resenting the treatment of his contributors, who seem to have been slack in the performance of their engagements to support him, he returned to Bristol with an intent to come to London, a purpose he was hindered from effecting by an arrest of his person, on the 10th of January 1742-3, for the small sum of eight pounds, and carried to Newgate in that city, where, not being able to extricate himself from his confinement, he, on the 31st day of July, in the same year, died.

This event, and the affection which he had long entertained for the man, called forth Johnson to an exercise of his pen, which, as it is said, employed it only thirty-six hours, in a narrative of events so singular

as could scarcely fail to gratify the curiosity of every one who wished to be instructed in the science of human life. The subject was such an one as is seldom exhibited to view; a man dropped into the world as from a cloud, committed to the care of those who had little interest in his preservation, and none in the forming his temper, or the infusing into him those little precepts of morality, which might germinate in his mind, and be productive of habitual virtue; these are advantages which children of the lowest birth enjoy, in some degree, in common with those of a higher; but of these he never participated. All the knowledge he attained to, from his infancy upwards, was self-acquired, and, bating that he was born in a city where the refinements of civil life presented to his view a rule of moral conduct, he may be said to have been little less a miracle than Hai Ebn Yokdhan is feigned to be.

It has been observed of those children who owe their nurture and education to a certain benevolent institution in this metropolis, that being by their misfortune strangers to those charities that arise from the relations of father, son, and brother, their characters assume a complexion that marks their conduct through life. The same may be said of Savage, and will perhaps account for that want of gratitude to his benefactors, and other defects in his temper, with which he seems to have been justly chargeable.

The manner in which Johnson has written this life is very judicious: it afforded no great actions to celebrate, no improvements in science to record, nor any variety of events to remark on. It was a succession
of

of disappointments, and a complication of miseries ; and as it was an uniform contradiction to the axiom that human life is chequered with good and evil accidents, was alone singular. The virtues and vices which like flowers and weeds sprang up together, and perhaps with an equal degree of vigour, in the mind of this unfortunate man, afforded, it is true, a subject of speculation, and Johnson has not failed to avail himself of so extraordinary a moral phenomenon as that of a mind exalted to a high degree of improvement without the aid of culture.

But if the events of Savage's life are few, the reflections thereon are many, so that the work may as well be deemed a series of œconomical precepts as a narrative of facts. In it is contained a character, which may be said to be *sui generis* ; a woman who had proclaimed her crimes, and solicited reproach, disowning from the instant of his birth, and procuring to be illegitimated by parliament, her own son, dooming him to poverty and obscurity, and launching him upon the ocean of life, only that he might be swallowed by its quick-sands, or dashed upon its rocks, and lastly, endeavouring to rid herself from the danger of being at any time made known to him, by secretly sending him to the American plantations.

It farther exhibits to view, a man of genius destitute of relations and friends, and with no one to direct his pursuits, becoming an author by necessity, and a writer for the stage, and forming such connections as that profession leads to, sometimes improving, and at others flighting them, but at all times acting with a spirit that better became his birth than his circumstances ;

stances ; for who that knew how to distinguish between one and the other, would, like Savage, have solicited assistance, and spurned at the offer of it ? or repaid reiterated kindnesses with neglect or oblivious taciturnity ?

Interpersed in the course of the narrative are a great variety of moral sentiments, prudential maxims, and miscellaneous observations on men and things ; but the sentiment that seems to pervade the whole is, that idleness, whether voluntary or necessitated, is productive of the greatest evils that human nature is exposed to ; and this the author exemplifies in an enumeration of the calamities that a man is subjected to by the want of a profession, and by shewing how far less happy such an one must be than he who has only a mere manual occupation to depend on for his support.

The concluding paragraph of the book explains the author's intention in writing it, and points out the use that may be made of it in such pointed terms, that I shall need, as I trust, no excuse for inserting so fine a specimen of style and sentiment.

‘ This relation will not be wholly without its use,
 ‘ if those who languish under any part of his suffer-
 ‘ ings shall be enabled to fortify their patience by re-
 ‘ flecting, that they feel only those afflictions from
 ‘ which the abilities of Savage did not exempt him ;
 ‘ or if those who in confidence of superior capacities or
 ‘ attainments, disregard the common maxims of life,
 ‘ shall be reminded, that nothing will supply the
 ‘ want of prudence, and that negligence and irregu-
 ‘ larity long continued, will make knowledge useless,
 ‘ wit ridiculous, and genius contemptible.’

This

This celebrated essay in biography was published in the month of February 1744, and gave occasion to Henry Fielding, the author of a periodical paper intitled 'The Champion,' to commend it in these words: 'This pamphlet is, without flattery to its author, as just and well written a piece as, of its kind, I ever saw; so that, at the same time that it highly deserves, it stands certainly very little in need of this recommendation.——As to the history of the unfortunate person whose memoirs compose this work, it is certainly penned with equal accuracy and spirit, of which I am so much the better judge, as I knew many of the facts mentioned in it to be strictly true, and very fairly related. Besides, it is not only the story of Mr. Savage, but innumerable incidents relating to other persons and other affairs, which render this a very amusing, and withal, a very instructive and valuable performance. The author's observations are short, significant and just, as his narrative is remarkably smooth and well disposed: his reflections open to us all the recesses of the human heart, and, in a word, a more just or pleasant, a more engaging or a more improving treatise on the excellencies and defects of human nature, is scarce to be found in our own or perhaps in any other language.'

The life I am now writing seems to divide itself into two periods; the first marked by a series of afflictions, the last by some cheering rays of comfort and comparative affluence. Johnson, at this time, had passed nearly the half of his days: here, therefore, let me make a stand, and having hitherto represented him

him in his literary, endeavour to exhibit him in his religious, moral, and œconomical character, adverting first to such particulars respecting the course of life he had chosen, and the evils to which it exposed him, as seem properly to belong to the first member of the above division.

As the narrowness of his father's circumstances had shut him out of those professions for which an university education is a necessary qualification, and his project of an academy had failed, he had, as to his course of life, no choice but idleness or the exercise of his talents in a way that might afford him subsistence, and provide for the day that was passing over him, so that the profession of an author was the only one in his power to adopt. That it was far from an eligible one, he had in some degree experienced, and his aversion to labour magnified the evils of it, by bringing to his recollection the examples of Amhurst, of Savage, of Boyse*, and many others, from

* The lives of these three persons as they exhibit an example of the distresses to which idleness and the want of moral principles may expose men of parts, may be an useful caveat to young men of the rising generation, and prove a more powerful persuasive to industry, œconomy, and the right use of great talents, than the most laboured argument. That of Savage presents itself to view in the works of Johnson: those of the other two are elsewhere to be found, and an abridgement of each of them is inserted, for the same reason that beacons are erected to point out rocks and shoals to ignorant or benighted persons.

Nicholas Amhurst was born at Marden in Kent; but in what year is uncertain: he received his education in Merchant-Taylors' school in London, and was thence removed to St. John's college, Oxford; but expelled for the libertinism of his principles and the irregularity of his conduct. After this expulsion, for which very different causes were assigned by him and those who enforced

it,

from which he inferred, that slavery and indigence were its inseparable concomitants, and reflecting on the

it, he satirized the learning and discipline of the university, and exposed the characters of its most respectable members, in a poem called 'Oculus Britanniae,' and in his 'Terræ Filius,' a work compounded of wit and scurrility. He, soon after, quitted Oxford, came to London, and published a volume of miscellanies: he wrote many satirical and malignant poems, and translated some of Mr. Addison's Latin pieces; but his chief fame arose from his conducting the 'Craftsman,' in which he was made the tool of opposition. For some extraordinarily indiscreet use of his libelling powers, the printers of this paper were seized, and Mr. Amburst, with a view of being considered as the victim of his party, and more than indemnified for all he should suffer, surrendered himself; but the prosecution dropped, and he was disappointed. Upon the famous compromise of 1742, no terms were stipulated by his friends for him who had been the instrument of their success; the reflection whereon is thought to have precipitated his end; for he died in a few months after, as is said, of a broken heart, and was indebted to the bounty of Franklin the printer for a grave.

Samuel Boyse, the son of an English dissenting minister, was born in 1708, and educated at a private school in Dublin. At eighteen he was sent to Glasgow, and before he had completed his nineteenth year, married the daughter of a tradesman there. His father, for a considerable time, supported his natural extravagance, which his wife, who was dissolute and vicious, rendered still more burthensome. This resource failing, he went to Edinburgh, where his poetical abilities procured him many friends, particularly the countess of Eglinton and lord Stormont, who assisted him in his exigencies, and were disposed to continue their bounty; but Boyse's character and deportment repelled kindness. His talents were great: he had a genius for poetry, for painting, and music; yet it was so obscured by a mean and sordid temper, that many knew him intimately without discovering his abilities: his chosen acquaintances were such as could not serve him: he was intoxicated whenever he had the means to avoid starving, and was voluptuous, luxurious, and boundlessly expensive, without the least taste for what is elegant. The contempt he drew on himself at Edinburgh made him
resolve

the lives and conduct of these men, might fear that it had a necessary tendency to corrupt the mind, and render

resolve on quitting it for London, whither those who had been his patrons gave him very valuable recommendatory letters; but he slighted them, and preferred subsisting by precarious donations. In the year 1740 he was reduced to the want of necessary apparel, and having pawned whatever he could exist without, was confined by his indigence to a bed which had no sheets: here, to procure food, he wrote; his posture sitting up in bed, his only covering a blanket, in which a hole was made to admit of the employment of his arm.

In 1742, while in a spunging-house, he was driven to solicit Cave for some temporary relief, and to procure it, wrote the following horrible description of the situation into which his neglect of œconomy and his want of common prudence had plunged him.

‘ Inscription for St. LAZARUS’S cave.

- ‘ Hodie, teste cœlo summo,
- ‘ Sine pane, sine nummo;
- ‘ Sorte positus infeste,
- ‘ Scribo tibi dolens mœste.
- ‘ Fame, bile, tumet jecur:
- ‘ Urbane, mitte opem, precor
- ‘ Tibi enim cor humanum
- ‘ Non a malis alienum:
- ‘ Mihi mens nec male grato,
- ‘ Pro a te favore dato.

A L C Œ U S.

- ‘ Ex gehenna debitoria,
- ‘ Vulgo, domo spongiatoria.’

‘ SIR,

- ‘ I wrote you yesterday an account of my unhappy case. I am
- ‘ every moment threatened to be turned out here, because I have
- ‘ not money to pay for my bed two nights past, which is usually
- ‘ paid beforehand; and I am loth to go into the counter, till I
- ‘ see

render the followers of it, with respect to religion, to politics, and even to morality, altogether indifferent. Nor could he be ignorant of that mortifying dependence which the profession itself exposes men to, a profession that leads to no preferment, and for its

‘ see if my affair can possibly be made up. I hope, therefore, you
 ‘ will have the humanity to send me half a guinea for support, till
 ‘ I can finish your papers in my hands. The ode on the British
 ‘ nation I hope to have done to day, and want a proof copy of that
 ‘ part of Stowe you design for the present magazine, that it may be
 ‘ improved as far as possible from your assistance. Your papers are
 ‘ but ill transcribed. I agree with you as to St. Augustine’s cave.
 ‘ I humbly intreat your answer, having not tasted any thing since
 ‘ Tuesday evening I came here ; and my coat will be taken off my
 ‘ back for the charge of the bed, so that I must go into prison naked,
 ‘ which is too shocking for me to think of.

‘ I am, with sincere regard,

‘ Sir,

‘ Your unfortunate humble servant,

‘ S. BOYSE.’

‘ Crown coffee-house, Grocer’s alley,

‘ Poultry, July 21, 1742.

‘ Received from Mr. Cave the sum of half a guinea by me, in
 ‘ confinement, S. Boyse.’

The miseries of his confinement did not teach him discretion : he was released, but his wants were little abated, and he made use of the most disgraceful arts to excite charity : he sometimes raised subscriptions for non-existent poems, and sometimes employed his wife to give out that he was dying. He was afterwards engaged, at a very low rate, in the compilation of an historical view of the transactions of Europe, by Mr. Henry of Reading ; at which place his wife died. To signify his sorrow for her death, he tied a black ribbon round the neck of a lap-dog, which, to acquire the character of a man of taste, he used to carry in his arms. After he left Reading, he grew more decent in his dress and behaviour ; but his health was then declining, and in May 1749 he died in an obscure lodging near Shoe-lane, and was buried at the charge of the parish.

most

most laborious exertions confers no greater a reward than a supply of natural wants.

Ralph, a writer of this class, and who had formed some such connections as would have flattered the hopes of any man, was the tool of that party of which the late lord Melcombe laboured to be the head. To serve the interests of it, he wrote a periodical paper, and a voluminous history of England, fraught with such principles as he was required to disseminate. This man, in a pamphlet intitled 'The case of authors by profession,' has enumerated all the evils that attend it, and shewn it to be the last that a liberal mind would choose.

All this Johnson knew and had duly weighed: the lesser evils of an author's profession, such as a dependence on booksellers, and a precarious income, he was able to endure, and the greater, that is to say, the prostitution of his talents, he averted; for, whatever sacrifices of their principles such men as Waller, Dryden, and others, have made in their writings, or to whatever lengths they may have gone in panegyrics or adulatory addresses, his integrity was not to be warped: his religious and political opinions he retained and cherished; and in a full confidence in the strength of his mental powers, disdained to solicit patronage by any of the arts in common use with writers of almost every denomination. That this firmness was not affected, will appear by a retrospect to the methods he took for the attainment of knowledge, and the settling his notions as to the great duties of life.

His course of study at the university was irregular and desultory, and scarcely determined as to its object.

Mathematics and physics he had but little relish for, from whence it may be inferred, that his natural powers had received comparatively but small improvement from an academical education. An habitual disposition to thought and reflection enabled him however upon his leaving it, to attain to that degree of improvement which, in many minds, is not effected without intense application and labour; and the sentiments of piety which he had imbibed in his youth, directed him to those studies, which, without attending to secular rewards, he thought of greatest importance to his future happiness. In conformity to this motive, he applied himself to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and the evidences of religion, to the writings of the fathers and of the Greek moralists, to ecclesiastical and civil history, and to classical literature and philology.

The result of these his mental exercises was a thorough conviction of the truth of the Christian religion, an adherence to the doctrine and discipline of our established church, and to that form of civil government which we number among the blessings derived to us from the wisdom and bravery of our ancestors, with this farther advantage, that they rooted in his mind those principles of religion, morality, and, I will add, loyalty, that influenced his conduct during the remainder of his life.

To speak of the first, his religion, it had a tincture of enthusiasm, arising, as is conjectured, from the fervour of his imagination, and the perusal of St. Augustine and other of the fathers, and the writings of Kempis and the ascetics, which prompted him to the employment of composing meditations and devotional exercises.

cises. It farther produced in him an habitual reverence for the name of God, which he was never known to utter but on proper occasions and with due respect, and operated on those that were admitted to his conversation as a powerful restraint of all profane discourse, and idle discussions of theological questions; and, lastly, it inspired him with that charity, meaning thereby a general concern for the welfare of all mankind, without which we are told that all pretensions to religion are vain.

To enable him at times to review his progress in life, and to estimate his improvement in religion, he, in the year 1734, began to note down the transactions of each day, recollecting, as well as he was able, those of his youth, and interspersing such reflections and resolutions as, under particular circumstances, he was induced to make. This register, which he intitled ‘Annales,’ does not form an entire volume, but is contained in a variety of little books folded and stitched together by himself, and which were found mixed with his papers. Some specimens of these notanda have been lately printed with his prayers; but to warrant what I have said, respecting his religious character, I have selected from the ‘Annales,’ and insert in the margin below, an earlier extract than any contained in that collection*.

His

* ‘Friday, August 27th,’ [1734] ‘10 at night. This day I have trifled away, except that I have attended the school in the morning. I read to night in Rogers’s sermons. To night I began the breakfast law anew.

‘Sept. 7th, 1736. I have this day entered upon my 28th year. Mayest thou, O God, enable me for Jesus Christ’s sake, to spend

His moral character displayed itself in the sincerity of his friendships, his love of justice and of truth, and his placability; of all which qualities, the testimonies in his favour are innumerable. But as the character here proposed to be given him is not intended to palliate his errors in behaviour, truth obliges me to say, that his outward deportment was in many instances a just subject of censure. Before his arrival in town, he was but little accustomed to free conversation with his superiors, so that that kind of submission he had been used to pay them he seemed to exact from others, and when it was refused him he was petulant, captious, and dogged. His discourse, which through life was of the didactic kind, was replete with original sentiments expressed in the strongest and most correct terms, and in such language, that whoever could have heard and not seen him, would have thought him reading. For the pleasure he communicated to his hearers, he expected not the tribute of silence: on the contrary, he encouraged others, particularly young men, to speak, and paid a due attention to what they said; but his prejudices were so strong and deeply rooted, more especially against Scotchmen and whigs, that whoever thwarted him ran the risque of a severe rebuke, or at best became entangled in an unpleasant altercation.

He was scarce settled in town before this dogmatical behaviour, and his impatience of contradiction, became

‘ this in such a manner that I may receive comfort from it at the hour of death, and in the day of judgment. Amen.

‘ I intend to-morrow to review the rules I have at any time laid down, in order to practise them.’

a part

a part of his character, and deterred many persons of learning, who wished to enjoy the delight of his conversation, from seeking his acquaintance. There were not wanting those among his friends who would sometimes hint to him, that the conditions of free conversation imply an equality among those engaged in it, which are violated whenever superiority is assumed: their reproofs he took kindly, and would in excuse for what they called the pride of learning, say, that it was of the defensive kind. The repetition of these had, however, a great effect on him; they abated his prejudices, and produced a change in his temper and manners that rendered him at length a desirable companion in the most polite circles.

In the lesser duties of morality he was remiss: he slept when he should have studied, and watched when he should have been at rest: his habits were slovenly, and the neglect of his person and garb so great as to render his appearance disgusting. He was an ill husband of his time, and so regardless of the hours of refection, that at two he might be found at breakfast, and at dinner at eight. In his studies, and I may add, in his devotional exercises, he was both intense and remiss, and in the prosecution of his literary employments, dilatory and hasty, unwilling, as himself confessed, to work, and working with vigour and haste*.

His indolence, or rather the delight he took in reading and reflection, rendered him averse to bodily exertions. He was ill made for riding, and took so

* See his prayers page 124.

little pleasure in it, that, as he once told me, he has fallen asleep on his horse. Walking he seldom practised, perhaps for no better reason, than that it required the previous labour of dressing. In a word, mental occupation was his sole pleasure, and the knowledge he acquired in the pursuit of it he was ever ready to communicate: in which faculty he was not only excellent but expert; for, as it is related of lord Bacon by one who knew him*, that ‘in all companies he appeared a good ‘proficient, if not a master, in those arts entertained for ‘the subject of every one’s discourse,’ and that ‘his ‘most casual talk deserved to be written,’ so it may be said of Johnson, that his conversation was ever suited to the profession, condition, and capacity of those with whom he talked.

Of a mind thus stored it is surely not too much to say, that it qualified the possessor of it for many more important employments than the instruction of non-adults in the elements of literature; yet so humbly did he seem to think of himself when he published the advertisement of his little academy at Edial, that to be able to establish it, was the utmost of his ambition; but that hope failing, his necessities drove him to London, and placed him in the station of life in which we are now to contemplate him.

It has been mentioned in a preceding page, that in the course of his studies he had formed a list of literary undertakings, on which, when time should serve or occasion invite, he meant to exercise his pen: but such was the versatility of his temper, that of forty-nine articles which he had fixed

* Works of Francis Osborn, Esq; 8vo. 1673, page 151.

on, not one appears to have engaged his future attention. Among the rest he had purposed to give a history of the revival of learning in Europe, and also a comparison of philosophical and christian morality, by sentences collected from the moralists and fathers*. The former of these, as it required the labour of deep research, and the perusal of a great variety of authors, was a work that we may suppose he was deterred from by frequent reflections on the pains it would cost him; but that he should abandon a work so easy in the execution, and so much to the credit of the religion he professed, as the latter, is not less to be wondered at than lamented.

These projects of Johnson were most of them resolved on in his earlier days, but it is not improbable that he was induced to give them up by the prospect of the gain that might arise from the publication of a new edition of Shakespeare, which it is certain he meditated, about the year 1745. To an undertaking of this kind the temptations were very strong, for, besides that the former editors had fallen short in their endeavours to explain and settle the text, he had great reason to hope it would be well received, for at that time it was observable, that the taste of the public was refining, and that the lovers of stage entertainments and dramatic literature had begun to nauseate the tragedies and comedies of the last age, which were formed after French models, and to discern the beauties and excellencies of this author.

* Vide supra, page 83, 84. in not.

That this hope was not ill-grounded, may reasonably be inferred from the success of those many editions of this author that have appeared since the above time, of one whereof above eleven thousand copies have been sold, and next, from the effects of Mr. Garrick's acting, which had revived the exhibition of Shakespeare's plays, and excited readers of every class to the perusal of them.

But, perhaps, the greatest of Johnson's temptations to this undertaking, saving at all times his necessities, was, a desire to display his skill in English literature and rational criticism in their widest extent, in both which requisites the deficiencies of the former editions were obvious. Of those of the players and others, down to the year 1685, little in favour can be said: the first that made any pretensions to correctness was that of Rowe in 1709, and next to that, Mr. Pope's in 4to, 1723. Whatever other were the merits of these two persons, it is certain that neither of them was sufficiently qualified for the task he had undertaken; not that they wanted the power of discerning the excellences of their author, or clearing his page of many corruptions that had long obscured his sense, but that they were deficient in that lower kind of literature, without which all endeavours to fix or explain the text of an old writer will ever be found to be vain.

To this kind of knowledge, as far as may be judged from the course of his studies, and indeed from the preface to his edition, Rowe had not the least pretension. Nor does it appear that Pope was at all conversant with, or that he understood the phraseology of

of the writers contemporary with his author. So little was he used to that kind of reading, that, as himself confessed, he had never heard of the *Virgidemiarum* of bishop Hall, a collection of the wittiest and most pointed satires in our language, till it was shewn to him, and that so late in his life, that he could only express his approbation of it by a wish that he had seen it sooner. That vernacular erudition, contemptible as it has been represented, is an indispensable qualification for the restoring or explaining the sense of corrupted or obsolete authors, and even of those more recent, is most clearly evidenced in one case by the later editions of our great dramatic poet, and in the other by Dr. Grey's edition of *Hudibras*, without the assistance whereof, the many allusions to facts, circumstances, and situations therein contained, must for ever have remained unintelligible. Theobald was the first of this class of editors. For the purpose of publishing Shakespeare, he, in the preface to his first edition, asserts, that he had read no fewer than eight hundred old English plays, besides histories and novels to a great amount; and the same kind of study has, with different degrees of assiduity, been pursued by others, even to the last of his successors.

With these inducements, and the aid of two valuable editions then extant, Theobald's and that of Sir Thomas Hanmer, Johnson projected a new one, and, as a specimen of his abilities for the undertaking, published in the year 1745, 'Miscellaneous observations on the tragedy of Macbeth, with remarks on Sir Thomas Hanmer's edition of Shakespeare,' with proposals for one by himself. These observations, as

they go rather to adjust the various readings, and settle the text by conjectural notes, than explain allusions, did not enough attract the notice of the public to induce him actually to engage in the work; they were however evidences of great sagacity, and drew from Dr. Warburton a testimony that set him above all other competitors; for thus does he speak of Johnson: ‘As to
‘all those things which have been published under
‘the titles of Essays, Remarks, Observations, &c. on
‘Shakespeare, (if you except some critical notes on
‘Macbeth, given as a specimen of a projected edition,
‘and written as appears by a man of parts and genius)
‘the rest are absolutely below a serious notice;’ and Johnson, who never forgot a kindness, remembered it by mentioning Warburton in terms of great respect, as occasion offered, in his edition of Shakespeare, which he published many years after.

By this and other of Johnson’s writings, his reputation as a scholar and a philologist was so well established, that the booksellers of greatest opulence in the city, who had long meditated the publication of a dictionary, after the model of those of France and the Academia della Crusca, looked upon him as a fit person to be employed in such an undertaking. He was at that time in the vigour of his life, and by the offer of a liberal reward from men of such known worth as those were who made it, was tempted to engage with them, and accordingly set himself to compile that work, which, he living to complete it, does him and all concerned in it great honour.

Nor can we suppose but that he was in a great measure incited to the prosecution of this laborious work
by

THE LIFE OF
DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON. 171

by a reflection on the state of our language at this time, from the imperfection of all English dictionaries then extant, and the great distance in point of improvement in this kind of literature between us and some of our neighbours. And here let me take occasion, by an enumeration of the several authors that had gone before him, to point out the sources of that intelligence which Johnson's voluminous work contains.

Of Latin dictionaries and such as give the significations of English appellatives with a view only to illustrate the Latin, he must be supposed to have made some use, and of these the earliest is Sir Thomas Elyot's *Bibliotheca Eliotæ*, published in 1541. This was improved by Cooper after many years' labor, by the addition of 33000 words, and published in 1565 in a large folio, and was a reason with Queen Elizabeth for promoting him to the bishopric of Lincoln.*

In 1572 was published an *Alvearie* or quadruple dictionary of four fundry tongues, namely, English, Latin, Greek and French, by John Baret of Cambridge, compiled with the assistance of his pupils, but arranged and methodized by himself. This fact he ingenuously

* The following fact respecting this work remains upon record, viz. that his wife burnt the notes that he had been eight years gathering, and that he was other eight years in gathering the same notes wherewith he composed his dictionary. Her pretence was fear that he should kill himself with study; but she was a shrew and infamous for lewdness.

confessed

confessed in his preface, which, as a literary curiosity, is inserted below.†

To Baret's succeeded John Minshew's Guide into the tongues, first published in 1617 in eleven, and in 1627 in nine languages, but with a considerable increase in the number of radical words. In this the author undertakes to give the etymologies or derivations of the greater part of the words therein contained, but as they amount at the most to no more than 14713, the work must be deemed not sufficiently copious.

In 1656, Thomas Blount a lawyer of the Inner Temple, published a small volume, intitled 'Glossographia,

* ' About eightene yeeres agoe, hauing pupils at Cambridge
 ' studious of the Latine tongue, I vsed them often to write epistles
 ' and theames together, and dailie to translate some peece of Eng-
 ' lish into Latine, for the more speedie and easie attaining of the
 ' same. And after we had a little begun, perceiuing what great
 ' trouble it was to come running to me for euerie worde they missed,
 ' (knowing then of no other dictionarie to helpe vs, but Sir *Thomas*
 ' *Eliot's* librarie, which was come out a little before :) I appointed
 ' them certaine leaues of the same booke euerie daie to write the
 ' English before the Latin, and likewise to gather a number of fine
 ' phrases out of *Cicero*, *Terence*, *Cæsar*, *Liuius*, &c. & to set them
 ' vnder severall titles, for the more readie finding them againe at
 ' their neede. Thus within a yeere or two, they had gathered
 ' together a great volume, which (for the apt similitude betweene
 ' the good scholers and diligent bees in gathering their waxe and
 ' honie into their hive) I called then their *Aluearie*, both for a
 ' memoriall, by whom it was made, and also by this name to in-
 ' courage other to the like diligence, for that they should not see
 ' their worthie praise for the same, vnworthilie drowned in obliuion.
 ' Not long after, diuers of our friends borrowing this our worke
 ' which we had thus contriued and wrought onelie for our owne
 ' priuate vse, often and many waies moued me to put it in print
 ' f o f

‘ graphia, or a dictionary interpreting such hard words,
 ‘ whether Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, &c. that
 ‘ are now used in our refined English tongue, &c.’ in
 which the articles though few are well explained.
 This book, as far as it went, was of singular use to
 Edward Philips, a nephew and pupil of Milton, in
 the compilation of a dictionary by him published in
 folio, 1657, intitled ‘ The New World of Words,’
 which, as it is much more copious than that of Blount,
 and comprehends a great quantity of matter, must be
 looked on as the basis of English lexicography.

Of technical as also of etymological dictionaries,
 many have long been extant, namely, The Inter-
 preter

‘ for the common profit of others, and the publike propagation of
 ‘ the Latine tongue, or els to suffer them to get it printed at their
 ‘ proper costes and charges. But I both vnwilling, and halfe ashamed
 ‘ to haue our rude notes come abroad vnder the view of so manie
 ‘ learned eies, & especiallie finding no leasure from my prefixed
 ‘ studies for the polishing of the same, vtterlie denied their request,
 ‘ vntil at length comming to London, the right worshipfull maister
 ‘ *Powle*, & maister *Garth*, with other, singular fauourers of all good
 ‘ learning, and my verie especiall friends, with their importunate
 ‘ and earnest exhortations had cleane ouercome my contrarie mind.
 ‘ Then immediatelie laieng aside all other studies, I was faine to
 ‘ seeke for writers and workemen about the same, to make it readie
 ‘ for the presse. Therefore I went to diuers of mine old pupils then
 ‘ being at the Innes of Court, delivering ech of them some part of
 ‘ their old discontinued worke to see it written faire againe, and
 ‘ for other peeces which I thought vnperfect, I gat certaine of the
 ‘ best scholers of two or three scholes in London, to write after my
 ‘ prescription: but in the French tables, although I had before
 ‘ trauelled in diuers countries beyond the seas, both for language and
 ‘ learning: yet not trusting to mine owne skill, I vsed the helpe of
 ‘ *M. Chalonier*, and *M. Claudius*. Upon this occasion I being
 ‘ much conuersant about the Innes of Court, and also some time occu-
 ‘ pied

preter or Law Dictionary of Dr. Cowell a civilian, a Common-Law Dictionary of the above Thomas Blount, the Etymologicum of Junius, and another of Skinner, both well known and frequently referred to, and of these did Johnson avail himself.

The dictionary of Nathan Bailey a school-master, was first published in a thick octavo volume, so well disposed with respect to the character and method of printing, as to contain more matter than could otherwise have been comprized in a volume of that size. After it had passed many editions with improvements by the author himself, he meditated an enlargement of it, and being assisted in the

‘ pied among scholers in the scholes, there came vnto me a printer
 ‘ shewing me *Hulæts* dictionarie (which before I neuer sawe) and
 ‘ told me he intended to print it out of hand, augmented with our
 ‘ notes also if I would. But this bargaine went not forward with
 ‘ him for diuers causes which here it were to long to reherse. And
 ‘ surelie, had not the right honourable Sir *Thomas Smith* knight,
 ‘ principall secretarie to the Queenes Maiestie, that noble *Thesens*
 ‘ of learning, and comfortable patrone to all students, and the right
 ‘ worshipfull M. *Norwell* deane of Pawles, manie waies encouraged
 ‘ me in this wearie worke (the charges were so great, and the losse
 ‘ of my time so much grieved me) I had never bene able alone to
 ‘ haue wrestled against so manie troubles, but long ere this had
 ‘ cleane broken off our worke begun, and cast it by for euer.

‘ Now therefore (gentle reader) looke not to finde in this booke
 ‘ euerie thing whatsoever thou wouldest seeke for, as though all
 ‘ things were here so perfect that nothing lacked, or were possible
 ‘ to be added hereunto. But if thou maiest onelie find here the
 ‘ most wordes that thou needest, or at the least so manie as no other
 ‘ dictionarie yet extant, or made hath the like: take then I saie in
 ‘ good part this our simple *Aluearie* in the meane time, and geue
 ‘ God the praise that first moued me to set my pupils on worke
 ‘ thereabout, and so mercifullie also hath strengthened vs (thus as it
 ‘ is) at length to achieve and finish the same.’

mathematical

mathematical part by Mr. Gordon, in the botanical by the famous gardener Philip Miller, and in the etymological by Mr. Lediard, a professor of the modern languages, it was published in a folio size. The last improvement of it was by Dr. Joseph Nicoll Scott, who, of a dissenting teacher had become a physician and a writer for the booksellers.

Johnson, who before this time, together with his wife, had lived in obscurity, lodging at different houses in the courts and alleys in and about the Strand and Fleet street, had, for the purpose of carrying on this arduous work, and being near the printers employed in it, taken a handsome house in Gough square, and fitted up a room in it with desks and other accommodations for amanuenses, who, to the number of five or six, he kept constantly under his eye. An interleaved copy of Bailey's dictionary in folio he made the repository of the several articles, and these he collected by incessant reading the best authors in our language, in the practice whereof, his method was to score with a black-lead pencil the words by him selected, and give them over to his assistants to insert in their places. The books he used for this purpose were what he had in his own collection, a copious but a miserably ragged one, and all such as he could borrow; which latter, if ever they came back to those that lent them, were so defaced as to be scarce worth owning, and yet, some of his friends were glad to receive and entertain them as curiosities.

It seems that Johnson had made a considerable progress in his work when he was informed, that the earl of Chesterfield had heard and spoken favourably of his design. He had never till this time experienced

enced the patronage of any other than booksellers, and though he had but an indistinct idea of that of a nobleman, a reputed wit, and an accomplished courtier, and doubted whether he was to rate it among the happy incidents of his life, it might mean a liberal present or an handsome pension to encourage him in the prosecution of the work; he therefore resolved not to reject it by a supercilious comparison of his own talents with those of his lordship, or to slight a favour which he was not able to estimate. Accordingly, he in the year 1747, drew up and dedicated to lord Chesterfield, then a secretary of state, a plan of his dictionary, the manuscript whereof he delivered to Mr. Whitehead the late laureat, who undertook to convey it to his lordship, but he having communicated it first to another person, it passed through other hands before it reached that to which it was immediately directed: the result was an invitation from lord Chesterfield to the author.

Never could there be a stronger contrast of characters than this interview produced: a scholar and a courtier, the one ignorant of the forms and modes of address, the other, to an affected degree, accomplished in both: the one in a manly and sententious stile directing his discourse to a weighty subject; the other dreading to incur the imputation of pedantry, and by the interposition of compliments and the introduction of new topics as artfully endeavouring to evade it. The acquaintance thus commenced was never improved into friendship. What his lordship thought of Johnson we may learn from his letters to an illegitimate son, now extant*. Johnson was so little pleased

* Letter 220.

with his once supposed patron, that he forbore not ever after to speak of him in terms of the greatest contempt.

How far Johnson was right in his opinion of this popular nobleman, or whether he is to be suspected of having resented more than he ought to have done, the coldness of his reception, or the disappointment of his hopes, will best appear by a survey of his character, as it arises out of the memoirs of his life prefixed to his miscellaneous works, and the sentiments and principles which, for the instruction of his son, he, in a course of letters to him, from time to time communicated, and with the utmost sollicitude laboured to inculcate and enforce.

His lordship's descent was from an illustrious, though not a very ancient family. Being, as himself relates, rather neglected by his father, and in his tender years bereft of his mother, the care of his education devolved on his grandmother, the marchioness of Halifax, a woman of exemplary virtue and discretion, who fearing, perhaps, the contagion of a public seminary, kept him in her family, and with the best assistance of instructors that she could procure, conferred on him all the benefits that could be hoped for in a course of domestic education.

At the age of eighteen he was sent to Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where, as he informs us, he had a great deal of business on his hands, for he spent above an hour every day in studying the civil law, and as much in philosophy, and attended the mathematical lectures of the blind man [professor Saunderson] so that, adds he, I am now fully employed. But not-

withstanding this intense application to his studies, this hopeful young nobleman seems to have brought from the university less of what all such seminaries profess to teach, sound learning and good morals, than a hatred of that pedantry and illiberality of manners, which, throughout his writings, he reprobates as the inseparable concomitant of all academical institutions.

As I have not taken upon me the office of his lordship's biographer, I shall content myself with mentioning only those circumstances of his life and conduct that may serve to display his genuine character, and enable the world to determine whether it was such a one as a wise man would chuse as a model for imitation, or the standard by which he would form his own.

After about two years stay at the university, lord Stanhope, for that was then his only title, went abroad to travel, and at that enchanting place the Hague, began to be acquainted with the world. The college rust, which, if we may believe his panegyrist, he contracted in the university during so long a residence there, he found means to rub off, and exchanged for the polish of gaming, which rendered him the dupe of knaves and sharpers almost throughout his life, and this not from any real propensity to this pernicious vice, arising either from avarice or the exercise of those mental powers that make it a delight to many, but to acquire, what throughout his life he seems to have above all things been desirous of, the insipid character of a man of fashion.

Nature, it must be owned, had endowed him with fine parts, and these he cultivated with all the industry usually practised by such as prefer the semblance of
what

what is really fit, just, lovely, honourable, to the qualities themselves; thus he had eloquence without learning, complaisance without friendship, and gallantry without love.

Not much to his honour, he, in the year 1715, suffered himself to be chosen for a Cornish borough, and took his seat in the house of commons, at an age when it was in the power of any single member, by the speaking of a very few words, to have turned him out of it. Upon a hint of his incapacity, occasioned by a pert speech of his making, he had the prudence to quit the house and retire to Paris, glad of an opportunity of finishing his noviciate in a city that abounded with those pleasures and amusements that best suit with a mind to which study and the rational exercise of its faculties are labour.

Upon the death of his father in 1726, he succeeded to his title, and his seat in the house of peers. His speeches in that assembly, which were, though flimsy, florid, gave him, as that species of eloquence will ever do, the reputation of a fine orator; and in this he was so confident, that he has not scrupled to confess, that he has spoken with great applause, as on the bill for reforming the calendar, on subjects that he understood not. ‘For my own part,’ says he, ‘I could just as soon have talked Celtic or Sclavonian to them [the lords] as astronomy, and they would have understood me full as well; so I resolved to do better than speak to the purpose, and to please instead of informing them;’ and for this he gives as a reason, what perhaps will be found to be a true one, that every nu-

• Letters to his son, number 215.

merous assembly is a mob, and to such a one reason and good sense are never to be talked.

In addition to his character of an orator and a statesman, he was emulous of that of a poet, his pretensions to which were founded on sundry little compositions in verse that from time to time appeared in collections of that kind; elegant it must be confessed; but generally immoral and oft times profane.

His dissimulation, deep and refined as it was, did not lead him to profess any sincere regard to virtue or religion: the grosser immoralities he affects to speak of with abhorrence; but such as might be practised without the loss of health and reputation he seemed to think there was no law against. He was therefore, if secret, vain in his amours, and though, setting aside his mien, his person had little to recommend it, for he was low of stature, had coarse features, and a cadaverous complexion*, his confidence in the prosecution of them was such as exposed him to greater risks of personal safety than most men would chuse to run; and of this I shall now produce an instance.

A lady of high quality, and a relation of one who had the story from her own mouth and told it me, having been married some few years but never having brought her lord a child, was surprised one morning by a visit from lord Chesterfield, whom she had frequently seen and conversed with at court. After the usual compli-

* He was also long-visaged and long-necked, but from the shoulders to the waist very short, which a wit once observing, said, he was a giant cut down, alluding to the practice of cutting down ships of war to render them more active.

ments had passed, his lordship in that easy gay style which he so strongly recommends to his son, gave her to understand, that he should be happy to form such a connection with her ladyship, as it was more than probable might give being to an heir to the honours and possessions of that noble family into which she had matched. I will not attempt to describe the indignation which the lady felt at such an unexampled instance of impudence as the proposal indicated. She rose from her chair, and with all the dignity of insulted modesty, commanded this well-bred lover, this minion of the graces, to quit her house, with this menace, 'Think yourself well off, my lord, that for this affront I do not order my servants to push you headlong out of doors.'

It is a refinement in modern gallantry, but an affront to human policy, to recognize in public, by the unqualified appellation of son, those to whom the laws of most civilized countries deny not only that but the privilege of heirs; yet this has this slave to forms and usages done in a series of letters to a young gentleman begotten by him out of wedlock, and in the life-time of one to whom we must suppose he once tendered himself, his honours, his possessions, and his heart. With a solicitude for his welfare, commendable it must be said in its general intention, he takes on himself to mold his person, to form his manners, and to furnish his mind. In the first of these particulars his lordship had great difficulties to encounter: the clay he had chosen to work upon was stiff, and resisted the plastic touch: the boy was encumbered with flesh, and nature had so carelessly compacted his limbs as scarcely

to leave them the power of flexure. In a word, in infancy he was shapeless, and in youth a looby. Never did a she-bear with more anxious assiduity labour to lick her cub into shape than this fond parent did to correct the errors of nature in the formation of this his darling: the head, the shoulders and the hands, were, by turns, the objects of his care; but the legs and feet seem to have engaged most of his attention: these upon his being sent abroad, were committed to the care of a dancing-master at Paris, whose instructions he estimates at a higher rate than the precepts of Aristotle*. He recommends to form his manners *les agrémens et les graces*,† *les manieres, la tournure, et les usages du beau monde*‡; and is perpetually reminding him of that trite maxim ‘*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.*’ ||

The best furniture of a young man’s mind are the precepts of religion and sound morality. Not a word of either of these do we meet with in two quarto volumes of those letters which I am now citing, but in them precepts of a different kind, such as respect his pleasures, abound. Assuming an air of sapience, which was not very natural to his lordship, he remarks, that in the course of the world the qualifications of theameleon are often necessary, nay, they must be carried a little farther, and exerted a little sooner; ‘for you should,’ adds he, ‘to a certain degree take the hue of either the man or woman that you want and wish to be upon terms with.’ Fatherly curiosity then prompts him to an enquiry into certain particulars, which these his own words will go near to explain:—

* Letter 215. † Letter 214. ‡ Letter 217. || Letter 213.

‘Apropos:

‘ Apropos : have you yet found out at Paris any
 ‘ friendly and hospitable Madame de Lurfay, qui veut
 ‘ bien se charger du soin de vous éduquer ? And have
 ‘ you had any occasion of representing to her, qu’ elle
 ‘ faisoit donc des nœuds ? But I ask your pardon,
 ‘ Sir, for the abruptness of the question, and acknow-
 ‘ ledge that I am meddling with matters that are out
 ‘ of my department. However, in matters of less
 ‘ importance I desire to be de vos secrets le fidele dé-
 ‘ positaire. Trust me with the general turn and
 ‘ colour of your amusements at Paris. Is it le fracas
 ‘ du grand monde, comédies, bals, opéras, cour,
 ‘ &c. ? Or is it des petites sociétés moins bruiantes
 ‘ mais pas pour cela moins agréables ? Where are you
 ‘ the most établi ? Where are you le petit Stanhope ?
 ‘ Voyez vous encore jour, à quelque arrangement
 ‘ honnête ?’ Letter 212.

Farther to initiate him into vice, he recommends to him the ‘ turning over men by day and women ‘ by night,’ for thus it pleases him to render the precept *Nocturna versate manu versate diurna* * ; and with matchless effrontery and total disregard for the personal safety of him whom he is instructing, advises him, in effect, to risque being run through the body, or the breaking his neck out of a bed-chamber window, by commencing an intrigue with a new-married and virtuous young lady. Hear the documents of our Metnor to this purpose : ‘ Go,’ says he, ‘ among
 ‘ women, with the good qualities of your sex, and you
 ‘ will acquire from them the softness and the graces of
 ‘ theirs. Men will then add affection to the esteem

* Letter 217.

‘ which they before had for you.—Women are the
‘ only refiners of the merit of men : it is true they
‘ cannot add weight ; but they polish and give
‘ lustre to it. Apropos : I am assured that Madame
‘ de Blot, although she has no great regularity of
‘ features, is notwithstanding, excessively pretty, and
‘ that for all that, she has as yet been scrupulously
‘ constant to her husband, though she has now been
‘ married above a year. Surely she does not reflect
‘ that woman wants polishing. I would have you
‘ polish one another reciprocally. Affiduities, at-
‘ tentions, tender looks, and passionate declarations
‘ on your side, will produce some irresolute wishes at
‘ least on hers, and when even the slightest wishes
‘ arise, the rest will soon follow *.’

Finally, to attain these and the other ends which his lordship points out as the objects of his son’s pursuit, he inculcates in the strongest terms the practice of those arts of crooked cunning, which, as lord Bacon has remarked, oftner defeat than effect their purpose, and together with these, the general exercise of that dissimulation which was one of the most prominent features in his own character.

The letters from lord Chesterfield to his son are two hundred and eighty-five in number. The precepts contained in them are multifarious, and it is to be feared that they have not only been adopted by many ignorant parents and indiscreet tutors, but that they have greatly tended to corrupt the morals of the rising generation. As an antidote to the poison which they must be supposed to have diffused, I shall

* Letter 218.

here insert a letter of moral instruction from one of the wisest and greatest men that this nation ever had to boast of, to his son, and leave the reader to make the comparison between it and those of the nobleman of whom I am now speaking. It is from Sir Henry Sydney to his son Philip, afterwards the famous Sir Philip, who, when arrived at the age of manhood, combining the qualities of a soldier, a scholar, a poet, and a courtier, was confessedly one of the most accomplished gentlemen in Europe.

‘ I have received two letters from you, one written
 ‘ in Latin, the other in French, which I take in
 ‘ good part, and will you to exercise that practice of
 ‘ learning often, for that will stand you in most stead
 ‘ in that profession of life that you are born to live in.
 ‘ And since this is my first letter that ever I did write
 ‘ to you, I will not that it be all empty of some ad-
 ‘ vices, which my natural care of you provoketh me
 ‘ to wish you to follow, as documents to you in this
 ‘ your tender age. Let your first action be the
 ‘ lifting up of your mind to Almighty God by hear-
 ‘ ty prayer, and feelingly digest the words you
 ‘ speak in prayer with continual meditation and think-
 ‘ ing of him to whom you pray, and of the matter
 ‘ for which you pray, and use this as an ordinary, at,
 ‘ and at an ordinary hour, whereby the time itself
 ‘ will put you in remembrance to do that which you
 ‘ are accustomed to do. In that time apply your
 ‘ study to such hours as your discreet master doth
 ‘ assign you, earnestly, and the time I know he will
 ‘ so limit as shall be both sufficient for your learning,
 ‘ and safe for your health: and mark the sense and
 ‘ the

‘ the matter of that you read, as well as the words ;
‘ so shall you both enrich your tongue with words,
‘ and your wit with matter, and judgment will grow
‘ as years grow in you. Be humble and obedient
‘ to your master ; for unless you frame yourself to
‘ obey others, yea and feel in yourself what obedi-
‘ ence is, you shall never be able to teach others how
‘ to obey you. Be courteous of gesture, and affable
‘ to all men, with diversity of reverence according to
‘ the dignity of the person : there is nothing that
‘ winneth so much with so little cost. Use moderate
‘ diet, so as after your meat you may find your wit
‘ fresher and not duller, and your body more lively
‘ and not more heavy. Seldom drink wine, and yet
‘ sometime do, lest being inforced to drink upon the
‘ sudden you should find yourself inflamed. Use ex-
‘ ercise of body, but such as is without peril of your
‘ joints or bones : it will increase your force and en-
‘ large your breath. Delight to be cleanly as well in
‘ all parts of your body as in your garments : it shall
‘ make you grateful in each company, and otherwise
‘ loathsome. Give yourself to be merry ; for you
‘ degenerate from your father if you find not yourself
‘ most able in wit and body to do any thing when you
‘ be most merry : but let your mirth be ever void of
‘ all scurrility and biting words to any man, for a
‘ wound given by a word is oftentimes harder to be
‘ cured than that which is given with the sword. Be
‘ you rather a hearer and bearer away of other mens’
‘ talk than a beginner or procurer of speech, otherwise
‘ you shall be counted to delight to hear yourself
‘ speak. If you hear a wise sentence or an apt phrase,
‘ commit

‘ commit it to your memory, with respect of the cir-
 ‘ cumstances when you shall speak it. Let never
 ‘ oath be heard to come out of your mouth nor word
 ‘ of ribaldry: detest it in others; so shall custom
 ‘ make to yourself a law against it in yourself. Be
 ‘ modest in each assembly, and rather be rebuked of
 ‘ light fellows for maidenlike shamefacedness, than of
 ‘ your sad friends for pert boldness. Think upon
 ‘ every word that you will speak before you utter it,
 ‘ and remember how nature hath rampired up (as it
 ‘ were) the tongue with teeth, lips, yea and hair
 ‘ without the lips, and all betokening reins or bridles
 ‘ for the loose use of that member. Above all things
 ‘ tell no untruth, no not in trifles. The custom of it
 ‘ is naught, and let it not satisfy you that for a time
 ‘ the hearers take it for a truth, for after it will be
 ‘ known as it is, to your shame, for there cannot be a
 ‘ greater reproach to a gentleman than to be account-
 ‘ ed a liar. Study and endeavour yourself to be vir-
 ‘ tuously occupied; so shall you make such an habit
 ‘ of well-doing in you that you shall not know how
 ‘ to do evil, though you would. Remember, my son,
 ‘ the noble blood you are descended of by your mo-
 ‘ ther’s side, and think that only by virtuous life and
 ‘ good action you may be an ornament to that illust-
 ‘ rious family, and otherwise, through vice and sloth
 ‘ you shall be counted labes generis, one of the
 ‘ greatest curses that can happen to man.—
 ‘ Well (my little Philip) this is enough for me, and
 ‘ too much I fear for you: but if I shall find that
 ‘ this light meal of digestion nourish any thing the
 ‘ weak stomach of your young capacity, I will,
 ‘ as

‘ as I find the same grow stronger, feed it with tougher
‘ food.

‘ Your loving father, so long as
‘ you live in the fear of God,
‘ H. SYDNEY.’ *

The hopeful documents contained in this institute of politeness, lord Chesterfield's letters to his son, failed in a great measure of their end. His lordship's interest with the ministry, founded on a seat in parliament, which, though a great declaimer against corruption, he bought as he would have done a horse, procured him the appointment of an envoy-extraordinary to the court of Dresden. We find not that the young man had any female attachments, but that on the contrary he had more grace than his father. He married a woman, who becoming a widow, and provoked by real or imaginary ill treatment of lord Chesterfield, published those letters, which, had he been living, he would have given almost any thing to have suppressed, as they shew him to have been a man devoted to pleasure, and actuated by vanity, without religious, moral, or political principles, a smatterer in learning, and in manners a coxcomb.

Such was the person whom Johnson in the simplicity of his heart chose for a patron, and was betrayed to celebrate as the Mecænas of the age ; and such was the opinion he had conceived of his skill in literature, his love of eloquence, and his zeal for the interests of learning, that he approached him with the utmost respect, and that he might not err in his manner of expressing

* Sydney papers, vol. 1. page 8.

it, the stile and language of that address which his plan includes are little less than adulatory. With a view farther to secure his patronage, he waited on him in person, and was honoured by him with conversations on the subject of literature, in which he found him so deficient as gave him occasion to repent the choice he had made, and to say, that the labour he had bestowed in his address to lord Chesterfield resembled that of gilding a rotten post, that he was a wit among lords and a lord among wits, and that his accomplishments were only those of a dancing-master.

It is pretty well understood that, as Johnson had chosen this nobleman for his patron, he meant to have dedicated to him his work, and he might possibly have done so, even after he had discovered that he was unworthy of that honour; but the earl's behaviour in a particular instance prevented him. Johnson one day made him a morning visit, and being admitted into an anti-chamber, was told, that his lordship was engaged with a gentleman, but would see him as soon as the gentleman went. It was not till after an hour's waiting that Johnson discovered that this gentleman was Colley Cibber, which he had no sooner done, than he rushed out of the house with a resolution never to enter it more.

What impression Johnson's visits made upon his lordship, we are told by the latter in a character of him, which, as well for the sake of the one as the other, I wish to be held forth to the public. Speaking, as his lordship is ever doing, to his son of the engaging manners, the pleasing attentions, the graces, with the rest of that nonsense which was ever floating in his mind,

mind, he thus delineates the person, who, in language the most nervous and elegant had endeavoured to render him respectable in the republic of letters, and in that particular to do for him what he was never able to do for himself. ‘ There is a man whose moral character, deep learning, and superior parts, I acknowledge, admire, and respect; but whom it is so impossible for me to love, that I am almost in a fever whenever I am in his company. His figure (without being deformed) seems made to disgrace or ridicule the common structure of the human body. His legs and arms are never in the position which, according to the situation of his body, they ought to be in, but constantly employed in committing acts of hostility upon the graces. He throws any where, but down his throat, whatever he means to drink, and only mangles what he means to carve. Inattentive to all the regards of social life, he mis-times and mis-places every thing. He disputes with heat, and indiscriminately, mindless of the rank, character, and situation of them with whom he disputes: absolutely ignorant of the several gradations of familiarity and respect, he is exactly the same to his superiors, his equals, and his inferiors; and therefore, by a necessary consequence, absurd to two of the three. Is it possible to love such a man? No. The utmost I can do for him, is, to consider him as a respectable Hottentot*.’ Had Socrates been living, and not learned, as we are told he did in his old age, to dance, lord Chesterfield had passed the same censure on him.

Johnson was, by this time, able to determine on a fact which, in his address to this nobleman, he expresses

* Letter 212.

presses a doubt of, viz. whether the unexpected distinction his lordship had shewn him, was to be rated among the happy incidents of his life : he was now convinced that it was not, and that, far from every thing like encouragement or assistance, or what else is included in the idea of patronage, his lordship's approbation of his plan was to be the only recompence for the labour of drawing it out and reducing it to form. Besides declaring, whenever occasion required it, his mistake in supposing that lord Chesterfield was either a judge of or a friend to literature, he expressed in a letter to his lordship himself his resentment of the affront he had received at his last visit, and concluded it with a formal renunciation for ever of his lordship's patronage.

If Johnson had reflected a moment on the little effect likely to be produced by a letter in which he professed to reject that which he could not retain, he would never have wrote it. Those evils which cannot be remedied must be borne with patience, and to resent injuries when we cannot enforce redress, is to give our adversaries an occasion of triumph : lord Chesterfield knew this, and made no reply : when the dictionary was completed and about to be published, he wrote two essays in a periodical paper, intitled 'The World,' that contain some forced compliments of the author, which being mentioned to Johnson he rejected with scorn.

Further to appease him, his lordship sent two persons, the one a specious but empty man, Sir Thomas Robinson, more distinguished by the tallness of his
person

person than for any estimable qualities *; the other an eminent painter now living. These were instructed to apologize for his lordship's treatment of him, and to make him tenders of his future friendship and patronage. Sir Thomas, whose talent was flattery, was profuse in his commendations of Johnson and his writings, and declared that were his circumstances other than they were, himself would settle five hundred pounds a year on him. 'And who are you,' asked Johnson, 'that talk thus liberally?' 'I am,' said the other, 'Sir Thomas Robinson, a Yorkshire baronet.' 'Sir,' replied Johnson, 'if the first peer of the realm were to make me such an offer, I would shew him the way down stairs.'

No one will commend this manner of declining an intentional kindness, even where the sincerity of the intention might be doubtful, but the rejecting it with a menace was both unnecessary and insolent. The pride of independence

* This person who is now at rest in Westminster-abbey, was, when living, distinguished by the name of long Sir Thomas Robinson. He was a man of the world or rather of the town, and a great pest to persons of high rank or in office. He was very troublesome to the late duke of Newcastle, and when in his visits to him he was told that his Grace was gone out, would desire to be admitted to look at the clock, or to play with a monkey that was kept in the hall, in hopes of being sent for in to the duke. This he had so frequently done, that all in the house were tired of him. At length it was concerted among the servants that he should receive a summary answer to his usual questions, and accordingly at his next coming, the porter as soon as he had opened the gate and without waiting for what he had to say, dismissed him with these words, 'Sir, his Grace is gone out, the clock stands, and the monkey is dead.'

was

was most strong in Johnson at those periods of his life when his wants were greatest, and though at other times he would subject himself to great obligations, he was uniform, except only in one instance, in an opinion that an offer of pecuniary assistance was an insult, and not seldom rejected it with such indignation, that were I to characterise it more particularly, I should do it by an allusion to the following apologue: A gardener's dog had fallen into a well and was unable to get out: his master passing by, and seeing his distress, put down his arm to save him: the dog bit his hand, and the gardener left him to drown.

The uneasiness which Johnson felt, at the time when he wrote the above-mentioned letter, gave way to a call of his friend Garrick, who in the same year, 1747, was, by a series of occurrences, become master of Drury-lane theatre. I was never much conversant with the history of the stage, and therefore can give but a slight account of an event, which, at that time, interested many, and was deemed a very important one. Mr. Fleetwood's extravagance had reduced him to the necessity of seeking out for some one or more persons to whom, for an adequate consideration, he might relinquish his interest in the patent. At that time a man of the name of Lacy had attracted the notice of the town by a competition with orator Henley, which he began at the great room in York buildings, with a satirical discourse of great licence, which he advertised by the name of Peter's visitation. The liberties he had taken with the clergy and the principal officers of state in this ludicrous discourse gave great

offence : he was seized, dealt with as a vagrant, and, in short, silenced. This man had lived among players, and was supposed to understand stage-management, and had some friends. Mr. Garrick had many, and those opulent men : three of them, Mr. Draper the partner of Mr. Tonson the bookseller, Mr. Clutterbuck a mercer, and Mr. Samuel Sharpe one of the surgeons of Guy's hospital, negociated a partnership between those two persons, and by purchasing of them and assisting them to dispose of what are called renters' shares, enabled them to buy out Fleetwood, and before the commencement of the acting season, they were become joint-patentees of the theatre above-mentioned.

Mr. Garrick's province in the management was to appoint the plays and to cast the parts ; Lacy's was to superintend the workmen and servants, to order the scenery, and, with the assistance of artists, to adjust the ornaments and decorations. It was their resolution to banish from their stage, pantomimes and all grotesque representations, and to exhibit such only as a rational and judicious audience might be supposed inclined to approve.

To notify this their intention to the town, it seemed to them that a prologue was necessary : Johnson was easily prevailed upon by Mr. Garrick to write one, and at the opening of the theatre in 1747, it was spoken by the latter in a manner that did equal honour to the author and himself.

Prologues are addresses from the stage to the people, and either respect merely the drama that is to follow, or are of more general import setting forth to the audience the views and designs of managers,
their

their anxiety to please, and the methods by which they hope to obtain the favour of the public : these latter are for the most part occasional, and adapted to such circumstances as the opening a new theatre, a change of management, or any other of those great theatrical revolutions in which the players affect to think all men as much interested as themselves. In the addresses of this kind the powers of wit seem to have been nearly exhausted : sometimes the audience has been cajoled, at others, betrayed into good humour ; and by the help of allegory, the stage has been made to resemble every thing unlike it. One poet feigns that the town is a sea, the playhouse a ship, the manager the captain, the players sailors, and the orange-girls powder-monkeys ; and Mr. Garrick, in one of his prologues, would make his audience believe, that his theatre is a tavern, himself the master, the players waiters, and his entertainment wines suited to all palates : one of his liquors, in particular, he strongly recommends, and calls Shakespeare, which that he may be constantly able to supply, he says it is

‘ ————— his wish, his plan,
 ‘ To lose no drop of that immortal man.’ *

And, to be more particular, that

‘ ————— to delight ye,
 ‘ Bardolph is gin, and Pistol aqua-vitæ.’ †

Johnson’s prologue is of a very different cast. It is a sober, rational, and manly appeal to the good

* Prologue to the Winter’s Tale and Catherine and Petruchio.

† Ibid.

sense and candour of the audience, and contains a brief history of theatric representations from the time of Shakespeare and Jonson to their decline, when, as he says, the writers of pantomime and song had confirmed the sway of folly. It states the hardships which those lie under, whose business it is to furnish entertainment for the public, in being obliged to watch the wild vicissitudes of taste, and exhorts the hearers to patronize virtue and reviving sense.

To justify the above character of this nervous composition I here insert it:

‘ When Learning’s triumph o’er her barb’rous foes
 ‘ First rear’d the stage, immortal Shakespeare rose;
 ‘ Each change of many-colour’d life he drew,
 ‘ Exhausted worlds, and then imagin’d new:
 ‘ Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
 ‘ And panting Time toil’d after him in vain.
 ‘ His powerful strokes presiding Truth impress’d,
 ‘ And unresisted Passion storm’d the breast.

‘ Then Jonson came, instructed from the school
 ‘ To please in method, and invent by rule;
 ‘ His studious patience, and laborious art,
 ‘ By regular approach, essay’d the heart:
 ‘ Cold approbation gave the lingering bays;
 ‘ For those who durst not censure, scarce could praise.
 ‘ A mortal born, he met the general doom,
 ‘ But left, like Egypt’s kings, a lasting tomb.

‘ The wits of Charles found easier ways to fame,
 ‘ Nor wish’d for Jonson’s art, or Shakespeare’s flame.
 ‘ Themselves they studied; as they felt, they writ:
 ‘ Intrigue was plot, obscenity was wit.

‘ Vice

' Vice always found a sympathetic friend ;
 ' They pleas'd their age, and did not aim to mend :
 ' Yet bards like these aspir'd to lasting praise,
 ' And proudly hop'd to pimp in future days.
 ' Their cause was general, their supports were strong ;
 ' Their slaves were willing, and their reign was long ;
 ' Till Shame regain'd the post that Sense betray'd,
 ' And Virtue call'd Oblivion to her aid.

' Then crush'd by rules, and weaken'd as refin'd,
 ' For years the pow'r of tragedy declin'd ;
 ' From bard to bard the frigid caution crept,
 ' Till declamation roar'd, whilst passion slept ;
 ' Yet still did Virtue deign the stage to tread,
 ' Philosophy remain'd, though Nature fled.
 ' But forc'd, at length, her ancient reign to quit,
 ' She saw great Faustus lay the ghost of wit ;
 ' Exulting Folly hail'd the joyous day,
 ' And Pantomime and Song confirm'd her sway.

' But who the coming changes can presage,
 ' And mark the future periods of the stage ?
 ' Perhaps, if skill could distant times explore,
 ' New Behns, new Durseys, yet remain in store ;
 ' Perhaps, where Lear has rav'd, and Hamlet dy'd,
 ' On flying cars new forcerers may ride ;
 ' Perhaps (for who can guess the effects of chance ?)
 ' Here Hunt may box, or Mahomet * may dance.

' Hard is his lot that here by fortune plac'd,
 ' Must watch the wild vicissitudes of Taste ;
 ' With every meteor of Caprice must play,
 ' And chace the new-blown bubbles of the day.

* A rope-dancer, a real or pretended Turk, that exhibited on Covent-garden stage a winter or two before.

- ' Ah ! let not censure term our fate our choice,
 ' The stage but echoes back the public voice ;
 ' The drama's laws the drama's patrons give,
 ' For we that live to please, must please to live.
 ' Then prompt no more the follies you decry,
 ' As tyrants doom their tools of guilt to die ;
 ' 'Tis your's, this night, to bid the reign commence
 ' Of rescu'd Nature, and reviving Sense ;
 ' To chace the charms of sound, the pomp of show,
 ' For useful mirth and salutary woe ;
 ' Bid scenic Virtue form the rising age,
 ' And Truth diffuse her radiance from the stage.'

This masterly and spirited address failed in a great measure of its effect ; the town, it is true, submitted to the revival of Shakespeare's plays, recommended as they were by the exquisite acting of Mr. Garrick ; but in a few winters they discovered an impatience for pantomimes and ballad-farces, and were indulged with them. From that time Mr. Garrick gave up the hope of correcting the public taste, and at length became so indifferent about it, that he once told me, that if the town required him to exhibit the ' Pilgrim's Progress' in a drama, he would do it.

Two years after, the management of Drury-lane theatre being in the hands of his friends, Johnson bethought himself of bringing his tragedy on the stage. It was not only a juvenile composition, but was written before he had become conversant with Shakespeare, indeed before he had ever read Othello, and having now, for more than ten years, lain by him, in which time his judgment had been growing to maturity, he

set

set himself to revise and polish it, taking to his assistance Mr. Garrick, whose experience of stage decorum, and the mechanic operation of incidents and sentiments on the judgment and passions of an audience, was, by long attention, become very great. With these advantages and all those others which Mr. Garrick's zeal prompted him to supply, such as magnificent scenery, splendid and well-chosen dresses, and a distribution of the principal parts, himself taking a very active one, to the best performers then living, namely, Barry, Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Pritchard; it was, in the winter of the year 1749, presented to a polite, a numerous, and an unprejudiced audience. Never was there such a display of eastern magnificence as this spectacle exhibited, nor ever were fine moral sentiments more strongly enforced by correct and energetic utterance and just action, than in the representation of this laboured tragedy; but the diction of the piece was cold and philosophical; it came from the head of the writer, and reached not the hearts of the hearers. The consequence whereof was, that it was received with cold applause, and having reached to a ninth night's performance, was laid by. During the representation Johnson was behind the scenes, and thinking his character of an author required upon the occasion some distinction of dress, he appeared in a gold-laced waistcoat.

The truth of the above assertion, as to the language of this tragedy, is to be judged of by the perusal of it; for, notwithstanding its ill success as a dramatic representation, Johnson found his account in giving it to the world as a poem. Of the fable, the characters,

acters, and the sentiments, it is beside my purpose to speak; they are also now open to examination. It is nevertheless worthy of a remark, that the author has shewn great judgment in deviating from historical verity, as will appear by a comparison of the drama with the story as related by Knolles, and abridged in a foregoing page; for whereas the historian describes Irene as endowed with the perfections as well of the mind as of the body, and relates that she was an innocent victim to the ferocity of a tyrant, Johnson thought that such a catastrophe was too shocking for representation, and has varied the narrative by making the lady renounce her religion, and subjecting her to the suspicion of being a joint conspirator in a plot to assassinate the Sultan; but of which he is afterwards convinced she is innocent.

In thus altering the story, it must however be confessed, that much of its beauty is destroyed, and the character of Mahomet represented with none of those terrible graces that dignify the narrative: his public love and command over himself are annihilated, and he is exhibited as a tyrant and a voluptuary.

The world soon formed an opinion of the merit of Irene, which has never fluctuated: a representation during nine nights, was as much as a tragedy which excited no passion could claim; for, however excellent its precepts, and however correct its language, that it wants those indispensable qualities in the drama, interest and pathos, cannot be denied. We read it, admit every position it advances, commend it, lay it by, and forget it: our attention is not awakened by any eminent beauties, for its merit is uniform throughout;

out: all the personages, good or bad, are philosophers: those who execute and those who issue the orders talk the same language: the characters cause no anxiety, for the virtuous are superior to all mortal calamity, and the vicious beneath our care: the fate of Irene, though deplorable, is just; notwithstanding she suffers by a false accusation, her apostacy and treachery to her friend deserve punishment: the morality, it is needless to say of Johnson's spontaneous productions, is excellent; but how were unimpassioned precepts to make their way alone, where variety, business and plot are always expected? where lively nonsense and pathetic imbecillity often succeed against the conviction of reason? Or how could it be hoped that frigid virtue could attract those who suffer their pity to be easily moved either by the hero or the villain, if he has the address first to engage their passions?

Of the expectations that Johnson had entertained of the success of his tragedy, no conjecture can now be formed. If they are to be judged of by his outward demeanour after the town had consigned it to oblivion, they were not very sanguine; indeed the receipt of three nights must have afforded him some consolation; and we must suppose that he increased the emolument thence arising, by the sale of the copy. We are therefore not to impute it to the disappointment of a hope that the play would be better received than it was, that in the winter of the same year he published another imitation of Juvenal, viz. of his tenth satire, with the title of 'The vanity of human wishes;' the subject whereof, as it is an enumeration of the evils to which mankind are exposed, could not, at any period of his life, have been other than a
tempting

tempting one. Pursuing the track of his author, he expatiates on the miseries that await empire, grandeur, wealth, and power, and the disappointments that frustrate the hopes of ambition, learning, eloquence, and beauty ; in all which instances he has been able to point out examples the most striking and apposite.

The poem concludes with an answer to an enquiry that must necessarily result from the perusal of the foregoing part of it, viz. what are the consolations that human life affords ? or, in other words, in whom or on what is a virtuous man to rest his hope ? the resolution of this question is contained in the following lines, which for dignity of sentiment, for pious instruction, and purity of style, are hardly to be equalled by any in our language.

- ‘ Where then shall hope and fear their objects find ?
- ‘ Must dull suspense corrupt the stagnant mind ?
- ‘ Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate,
- ‘ Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate ?
- ‘ Must no dislike alarm, no wishes rise,
- ‘ No cries invoke the genius of the skies ?
- ‘ Enquirer, cease, petitions yet remain,
- ‘ Which Heav’n may hear, nor deem religion vain.
- ‘ Still raise for good the supplicating voice,
- ‘ But leave to Heav’n the measure and the choice.
- ‘ Safe in his pow’r, whose eyes discern afar
- ‘ The secret ambush of a specious pray’r ;
- ‘ Implore his aid, in his decisions rest,
- ‘ Secure, whate’er he gives, he gives the best.
- ‘ Yet when the sense of sacred presence fires,
- ‘ And strong devotion to the skies aspires,

‘ Pour

- ‘ Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,
- ‘ Obedient passions, and a will resign’d ;
- ‘ For love, which scarce collective man can fill ;
- ‘ For patience, sov’ reign o’er transmuted ill ;
- ‘ For faith, that panting for a happier feat,
- ‘ Counts death kind nature’s signal of retreat.
- ‘ These goods for man, the laws of Heav’n ordain ;
- ‘ These goods he grants, who grants the pow’r to gain ;
- ‘ With these celestial wisdom calms the mind,
- ‘ And makes the happiness she does not find.’

In the following year, it having been discovered, that a grand-daughter of Milton was living, Mr. Garrick was prevailed on to permit the representation of the Masque of Comus at his theatre, for her benefit. Upon this occasion, Johnson, forgetting the enmity which he had always borne towards Milton, wrote a prologue, wherein he calls the attention of the audience to his memory, and without imputing to his descendant any other merit than industrious poverty and conjugal fidelity, implores them to crown desert beyond the grave.

Johnson’s beneficence was of the most diffusive kind: Distress was the general motive, and merit, whether in the object or any to whom he claimed relation, the particular incentive to it. There was living at this time, a man of the name of De Groot, a painter by profession, and no contemptible artist, who, after having travelled over England, and at low prices painted as many persons as could be persuaded to sit to him, settled in London, and became reduced to poverty: him Oldys, or some one other of his friends, introduced to Johnson, who found out
by

by his conversation that he was a descendant of Grotius; and thereupon exerting his interest in his behalf, he procured for him an admission into the Charterhouse, in which comfortable retreat he died.

Johnson was all this while working at the dictionary, having to assist him a number of young persons whose employment it was to distribute the articles with sufficient spaces for the definitions, which it is easy to discern are of his own composition.

Of these his assistants, some were young men of parts, others mere drudges. Among the former was one of the name of Shiells, a Scotchman, the author of a poem in blank verse, intitled 'Beauty,' and also of a collection of the lives of the poets, in four volumes, which, for a gratuity of ten guineas, Theophilus Cibber suffered to be printed with his name, a book of no authority other than what it derives from Winstanley, Langbaine, and Jacob, and in other respects of little worth; but concerning which it is fit that the following fact should be made known: Cibber at the time of making this bargain, was under confinement for debt in the king's-bench prison, and with a view to deceive the public into a belief that the book was of his father's writing, it was concerted between the negotiators of it and himself to suppress his christian name, and that it should be printed as a work of Mr. Cibber.

The intense application with which he was obliged to pursue his work, deprived Johnson of many of the pleasures he most delighted in, as namely, reading in his desultory manner, and the conversation of his friends. It also increased his constitutional melancholy, and at times excited in him a loathing of that employment

employment to which he could not but look upon himself as doomed by his necessities. The sum for which he had stipulated with the booksellers, was by the terms of the agreement, to be paid as the work went on, and was indeed his only support. Being thus compelled to spend every day like the past, he looked on himself as in a state of mental bondage, and reflecting that while he was thus employed, his best faculties lay dormant, was unwillingly willing to work.

And here we cannot but reflect on that inertness and laxity of mind which the neglect of order and regularity in living, and the observance of stated hours, in short, the waste of time, is apt to lead men to : this was the source of Johnson's misery throughout his life ; all he did was by fits and starts, and he had no genuine impulse to action, either corporal or mental. That the compilation of such a work as he was engaged in, was necessarily productive of that languor, which, in the prosecution of it he manifested, is by no means clear : all employments, all occupations whatever, are intrinsically indifferent, and excite neither pain nor pleasure, but as the mind is disposed towards them. Fame, mere posthumous fame has engaged men to similar undertakings, and they have pursued them with zeal and even delight. Canne, the editor of a bible printed in 1664, spent many years in collecting parallel passages in the Old and New Testament, to such a number as to crowd the margin of the book, and in the preface thereto he declares, that it was the most delightful employment of his life ; and what but a real pleasure in that kind of labour,

and

and the consideration of its benefit to mankind, could be the inducement with such a man as Hoffman to compile a lexicon more than twice as voluminous as that of Johnson?

And, to speak more at large, viz. of men who have benefited the world by their literary labours, avowing as their motive the desire of gain, we find not all infected with that disease, which as it affected Johnson, may almost be said to have converted all his mental nutriment to poison: on the contrary, there have been many who mixed with the world, and by a good use of their time, were capable of great application and enjoying the benefits of society; and of these I shall mention three persons, his contemporaries, men of very different characters from each other; all authors by profession, and of great eminence in literature.

The first was the reverend Dr. Thomas Birch, a divine of the church of England, but originally a quaker. In his youth he was passionately fond of reading, and being indulged in it by his father, became successively usher to two schools in which the sons of quakers were educated. He married at the age of twenty-three; but in less than a year became a widower. Having had the happiness of a recommendation to Sir Philip Yorke, then attorney-general, and being honoured with his favour and patronage, he, in 1730, entered into holy orders, and was presented to a rectory and also to a vicarage in Gloucestershire. Soon after this, in conjunction with the reverend Mr. Bernard, the well-known Mr. John Lockman, and Mr. George Sale the translator of the Koran,

Koran, he compiled a general biographical dictionary in ten volumes in folio, including therein a translation of that of Bayle, and collected and published Thurloe's state papers, in seven folio volumes, and was the editor of lord Bacon's, Mr. Boyle's, and archbishop Tillotson's works, as also of the prose writings of Milton, and the miscellaneous pieces of Sir Walter Raleigh, and the works of Mrs. Elizabeth Cockburn. He was first a fellow of and afterwards secretary to the royal society, and wrote a history thereof. In 1753, the Marischal college at Aberdeen conferred on him the degree of doctor in divinity, and, the year after, he received the same honour from archbishop Herring. The above is but a partial enumeration of his publications, for he wrote the lives of Henry prince of Wales, of Bacon, Boyle, Milton, and Tillotson, and other persons, and many tracts not here noticed. In the midst of all this employment, Dr. Birch was to be seen, at home, at the Royal and Antiquarian societies, at Sion college, at the academy of ancient music, which had long subsisted at the Crown and Anchor in the Strand, at Tom's coffee-house in Devereux court; in short, in all places where a clergyman might with propriety appear. Nor was this all; he found time for the exercise of walking, before many people were stirring. I have been with him at nine in a winter's morning, and have found him just returned from an excursion of some miles*. He held a conversation on Sunday evenings

* I heard him once relate, that he had the curiosity to measure the circuit of London by a perambulation thereof: the account he gave was to this effect: He set out from his house in the Strand towards

ings with his friends, who were men of the first eminence for learning and intelligence, at his house in Norfolk street in the Strand†, in which all, particu-

towards Chelsea, and having reached the bridge beyond the waterworks, he directed his course to Marybone, from whence pursuing an eastern direction, he skirted the town, and crossed the Islington road at the Angel. There was at that time no city-road, but passing through Hoxton, he got to Shoreditch, thence to Bethnal green, and from thence to Stepney, where he recruited his spirits with a glass of brandy. From Stepney he passed on to Limehouse, and took into his rout the adjacent hamlet of Poplar, when he became sensible that to complete his design he must take in Southwark: this put him to a stand; but he soon determined on his course, for taking a boat he landed at the red house at Deptford, and made his way to Say's court, where the great wet-dock is, and keeping the houses along Rotherhithe to the right, he got to Bermondsey, thence by the south end of Kent-street to Newington, and over St. George's fields to Lambeth, and crossing over to Millbank continued his way to Charing cross, and along the Strand to Norfolk street, from whence he had set out. The whole of this excursion took him up from nine in the morning to three in the afternoon, and, according to his rate of walking, he computed the circuit of London at above twenty miles. With the buildings erected since, it may be supposed to have increased five miles, and if so, the present circumference of this great metropolis is about half that of ancient Rome.

† Formerly the habitation of the famous William Penn the quaker, of whom it is well known that his circumstances at a certain period of his life were so involved, that it was not safe for him to go abroad. He chose this house, it being at the south west corner of the street, as one from whence he might, upon occasion, slip out by water. In the entrance to it he had a peeping-hole, through which he could see any persons that came to him. One of these who had sent in his name, having been made to wait more than a reasonable time, knocked for the servant, whom he asked, 'Will not thy master see me?' 'Friend,' answered the servant, 'he has seen thee, but he does not like thee.' The fact was, that Penn had from his station taken a view of him, and found him to be a creditor.

larly

larly the library, was neat and elegant, without litter or disorder.

The mental endowments of Dr. Birch were singular; he had a great eagerness after knowledge, and a memory very retentive of facts; but his learning, properly so called, bore no proportion to his reading; for he was in truth neither a mathematician, a natural philosopher, a classical scholar, nor a divine; but, in a small degree, all, and though lively in conversation, he was but a dull writer. Johnson was used to speak of him in this manner: ‘Tom is a lively rogue; he remembers a great deal, and can tell many pleasant stories; but a pen is to Tom a torpedo, the touch of it benumbs his hand and his brain: Tom can talk; but he is no writer.’——And indeed whoever peruses his writings will be much of the same opinion: his life of Tillotson is a mere detail of unconnected facts, without the intermixture of sentiment or disquisition; and of the style, let this citation serve as a specimen. Speaking of Wilkins, he makes a transition to Tillotson, whom he characterizes in these words, and meaner he could not have found: ‘He went into all the very best things that were in that great man; but so as he improved every one of them.’

In the midst of all his labours and pursuits, Dr. Birch preserved an even temper of mind, and a great cheerfulness of spirits. Ever desirous to learn, and willing to communicate, he was uniformly affable, courteous, and disposed to conversation. His life was spent without reproach, but terminated by an unhappy accident, a fall from his horse on the Hampstead road, on the 9th day of January, 1766. His

preferments in the church, though successively numerous, were small and never reached to dignities: the last of them were the rectories of St. Margaret Pattens, London, and of Depden in Essex.

Dr. John Campbell was an eminent writer, and a labourer in a voluminous work undertaken at the expence and risque of the bookfellers, the Universal History. Besides many other books, he wrote the lives of the English admirals in four octavo volumes. He had a considerable hand in the Biographia Britannica, and was the author of a valuable work in two quarto volumes intitled, 'A political survey of Britain;' being a series of reflections on the situation, lands, inhabitants, revenues, colonies, and commerce of this island; intended to shew that they have not as yet approached to near the summit of improvement, but that it will afford employment for many ages, before they push to their utmost extent the natural advantages of Great Britain. The reputation of this work extended to the most remote parts of Europe, and induced the empress of Russia in the year 1774, to honour the author with a present of her picture. By the exercise of his pen alone, and a good use of his time, he was for many years enabled to support himself, and enjoy the comforts of domestic life in the society of an excellent wife and a numerous offspring. In 1765, he was appointed his majesty's agent for the province of Georgia in North America, and was thereby raised to a state of comparative affluence. His residence for some years before his death, was the large new-built house situate at the north-west corner of Queen square, Bloomsbury, whither, particularly on a Sunday evening, great numbers of persons of the first

first eminence for science and literature were accustomed to resort for the enjoyment of conversation. He died in 1775, having nearly completed the sixty-eighth year of his age, leaving behind him the character of a learned, an ingenious, and a pious man.

Dr. John Hill was originally an apothecary and a student in botany, in which he was encouraged by the late duke of Richmond, and lord Petre; but finding that an unprofitable pursuit, he made two or three attempts as a writer for the stage: a failure in them drove him back to his former study, in the course whereof he got introduced to Mr. Martin Folkes and Mr. Henry Baker, leading members of the royal society, who finding him a young man of parts and well skilled in natural history, recommended him among their friends. His first publication was a translation from the Greek of a small tract, Theophrastus on gems, which being printed by subscription, produced him some money, and such a reputation as induced the booksellers to engage him in writing a general natural history in two volumes in folio, and soon after, a supplement to Chambers's dictionary. He had received no academical education; but his ambition prompting him to be a graduate, he obtained, from one of those universities which would scarce refuse a degree to an apothecary's horse, a diploma for that of doctor of physic. After this, he engaged in a variety of works, the greater part whereof were mere compilations, which he sent forth with incredible expedition; and though his character was never in such estimation with the booksellers as to entitle him to an extraordinary price for his writings, he has been

known by such works as those above-mentioned, by novels, pamphlets, and a periodical paper called 'The Inspector,' the labour of his own head and hand, to have earned, in one year, the sum of 1500l. He was vain, conceited, and in his writings disposed to satire and licentious scurrility, which he indulged without any regard to truth, and thereby became engaged in frequent disputes and quarrels that always terminated in his own disgrace. For some abuse in his Inspector, of a gentleman of the name of Brown, he had his head broke in the circus of Ranelagh gardens. He insulted Woodward the player in the face of an audience, and engaged with him in a pamphlet-war, in which he was foiled *. He attacked the royal society in a review of their transactions, and abused his old friends Mr. Folkes and Mr. Baker for opposing, on account of his infamous character, his admission among them as a member. In the midst of all this employment, he found time and means to drive about the town in his chariot, and to appear abroad and at all public places, at Batson's coffee-house, at masquerades, and at the opera and playhouses, splendidly dressed, and as often as he could, in the front row of

* It was said of Hill, that when he met, in any botanic garden, with a curious plant that was portable, he would convey it away, and that he was once detected in an attempt of that kind. Woodward, in a pamphlet written against him, alluded to this fact by prefixing to it, as a motto, this apposite citation from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet:

'I do remember an apothecary

' — — — — —

'Culling of simples.'

the boxes. Towards the end of his life, his reputation as an author was so sunk by the slovenliness of his compilations, and his disregard to truth in what he related, that he was forced to betake himself to the vending a few simple medicines, namely, essence of water-dock, tincture of Valerian, balsam of honey, and elixir of Bardana, and by pamphlets ascribing to them greater virtues than they had, imposed on the credulity of the public, and thereby got, though not an honest, a competent livelihood.

Two years before his death, he had, as he gave out, received from the king of Sweden, the investiture of knight of one of the orders of that kingdom, in return for a present to that monarch of his 'Vegetable system' in twenty-six folio volumes. With all his folly and malignity, he entertained a sense of religion, and wrote a vindication of God and nature against the shallow philosophy of lord Bolingbroke.

Besides these, there was another class of authors who lived by writing, that require to be noticed: the former were, in fact, pensioners of the booksellers: these vended their compositions when completed, to those of that trade who would give most for them. They were mostly books of mere entertainment that were the subjects of this kind of commerce, and were and still are distinguished by the corrupt appellation of novels and romances. Though fictitious, and the work of mere invention, they pretended to probability, to be founded in nature, and to delineate social manners. The first publication of the kind was the 'Pamela' of Mr.

Richardson *, which being read with great eagerness by the young people of the time, and recommended from the pulpit, begat such a craving for more of the same stuff, as tempted some men whose necessities and abilities were nearly commensurate, to try their success in this new kind of writing.

At the head of these we must, for many reasons, place Henry Fielding, one of the most motley of literary characters. This man was, in his early life, a writer of comedies and farces, very few of which are now remembered; after that, a practising barrister with scarce any business; then an anti-ministerial writer, and quickly after, a creature of the duke of Newcastle, who gave him a nominal qualification of 100l. a year, and set him up as a trading-justice, in which disreputable station he died. He was the author of a romance, intitled 'The history of Joseph Andrews,' and of another, 'The Foundling, or the history of Tom Jones,' a book seemingly intended to sap the foundation of that morality which it is the duty of parents and all public instructors to inculcate in the minds of young people, by teaching that virtue upon principle is imposture, that generous qualities alone constitute true worth, and that a young

* Pamela is the name of a lady, one of the principal characters in Sir Philip Sidney's 'Arcadia,' and is thus accented Pamēla. So Mr. Pope,

‘ The Gods, to curse Pamēla with her pray’rs,
‘ Gave the gilt coach and dappled Flanders mares.’

But Richardson, whether through ignorance or design, and also all his female pupils, constantly pronounced it Pamēla.

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man may love and be loved, and at the same time associate with the loosest women. His morality, in respect that it resolves virtue into good affections, in contradiction to moral obligation and a sense of duty, is that of lord Shaftesbury vulgarised, and is a system of excellent use in palliating the vices most injurious to society. He was the inventor of that cant-phrase, goodness of heart, which is every day used as a substitute for probity, and means little more than the virtue of a horse or a dog; in short, he has done more towards corrupting the rising generation than any writer we know of.

He afterwards wrote a book of the same kind, but of a less mischievous tendency, his 'Amelia.' For each of these he was well paid by Andrew Millar the bookseller, and for the last he got six hundred pounds.

Dr. Tobias Smollet, another writer of familiar romance, and a dealer with the booksellers, was originally a surgeon's mate, and served at the siege of Carthagen. His first publication of this kind was 'The adventures of Roderick Random,' and his next those of Peregrine Pickle, in which is introduced the history of a well-known woman of quality, written, as it is said, by herself, under the name of lady Frail. These, and other compositions of the like kind, Smollet sold to the booksellers at such rates as enabled him to live without the exercise of his profession. He had a hand in 'The universal history,' and translated Gil Blas and also Telemachus. The success of the former of these tempted him to translate 'Don Quixote,' which, as he understood not the Spanish language, he could only do through the medium of the French and

the former English versions, none of which do, as it is said, convey the humour of the original. It might seem that Jarvis's translation was one impediment to such an undertaking; but that, though it gives the sense of the author, was performed by persons whose skill in the language was not great. The fact is, that Jarvis laboured at it many years, but could make but little progress, for being a painter by profession, he had not been accustomed to write, and had no style. Mr. Tonson the bookseller seeing this, suggested the thought of employing Mr. Broughton, the reader at the Temple church, the author and editor of sundry publications, who, as I have been informed by a friend of Tonson, sat himself down to study the Spanish language, and, in a few months, acquired, as was pretended, sufficient knowledge thereof, to give to the world a translation of Don Quixote in the true spirit of the original, and to which is prefixed the name of Jarvis.

I might here speak of Richardson as a writer of fictitious history, but that he wrote for amusement, and that the profits of his writings, though very great, were accidental. He was a man of no learning nor reading, but had a vivid imagination, which he let loose in reflections on human life and manners, till it became so distended with sentiments, that for his own ease, he was necessitated to vent them on paper. In the original plan of his 'Clarissa,' it was his design, as his bookseller once told me, to continue it to the extent of twenty-four volumes, but he was, with great difficulty, prevailed on to comprise it in six. The character of Richardson as a writer is to this day undecided, otherwise than by the avidity with which
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his publications are by some readers perused, and the sale of numerous editions. He has been celebrated as a writer similar in genius to Shakespeare, as being acquainted with the inmost recesses of the human heart, and having an absolute command of the passions, so as to be able to affect his readers as himself is affected, and to interest them in the successes and disappointments, the joys and sorrows of his characters. Others there are who think that neither his 'Pamela,' his 'Clarissa,' nor his 'Sir Charles Grandison' are to be numbered among the books of rational and instructive amusement, that they are not to be compared to the novels of Cervantes, or the more simple and chaste narrations of Le Sage, that they are not just representations of human manners, that in them the turpitude of vice is not strongly enough marked, and that the allurements to it are represented in the gayest colours; that the texture of all his writings is flimsy and thin, and his style mean and feeble; that they have a general tendency to inflame the passions of young people, and to teach them that which they need not to be taught; and that though they pretend to a moral, it often turns out a bad one. The cant terms of him and his admirers are sentiment and sentimentality.

Johnson was inclined, as being personally acquainted with Richardson, to favour the former opinion of his writings, but he seemed not firm in it, and could at any time be talked into a disapprobation of all fictitious relations, of which he would frequently say they took no hold of the mind.

I am tired of adducing instances of men who lived by the profession of writing and thought it
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an eligible one, and should now proceed to relate the subsequent events of Dr. Johnson's life, and mark the state of his mind at different periods, but that I find myself detained by a character, which, as it were, obtrudes itself to view, and is of importance enough to claim notice.

Laurence Sterne, a clergyman and a dignitary of the cathedral church of York, was remarkable for a wild and eccentric genius, resembling in many respects that of Rabelais. The work that made him first known as a writer, was, 'The life and opinions of Tristram Shandy,' a whimsical rhapsody, but abounding in wit and humour of the licentious kind. He too was a sentimentalist, and wrote sentimental journies and sentimental letters in abundance, by which both he and the booksellers got considerably. Of the writers of this class or sect it may be observed, that being in general men of loose principles, bad economists, living without foresight, it is their endeavour to commute for their failings by professions of greater love to mankind, more tender affections and finer feelings than they will allow men of more regular lives, whom they deem formalists, to possess. Their generous notions supersede all obligation: they are a law to themselves, and having good hearts and abounding in the milk of human kindness, are above those considerations that bind men to that rule of conduct which is founded in a sense of duty. Of this new school of morality, Fielding, Rousseau, and Sterne are the principal teachers, and great is the mischief they have done by their documents.

To these I might add the names of fundry persons of the same occupation, the authors of the Universal history in forty folio volumes, but that only a few of them are at this distance of time known: those are Psalmanaazar, George Sale, the above Dr. Campbell, and Mr. George Shelvocke, who, of a boy bred to the sea, became a man of learning, a travelling tutor, and at length attained to the lucrative employment of secretary of the post-office. Of these men it may be said that they were miners in literature, they worked, though not in darkness, underground; their motive was gain; their labour silent and incessant.

From the above enumeration of characters and particulars it may be inferred, that Johnson's indolence and melancholy were diseases of his mind, and not the necessary consequence of the profession he had taken up, that he saw human life through a false medium, and that he voluntarily renounced many comforts, gratifications, and even pleasures, obviously in his power. One effort however he made to soothe his mind and palliate the fatigue of his labours, which I here relate.

The great delight of his life was conversation and mental intercourse. That he might be able to indulge himself in this, he had, in the winter of 1749, formed a club that met weekly at the King's head, a famous beef-steak house, in Ivy lane near St. Paul's, every Tuesday evening. Thither he constantly resorted, and, with a disposition to please and be pleased, would pass those hours in a free and unrestrained interchange of sentiments, which otherwise had been spent

spent at home in painful reflection. The persons who composed this little society were nine in number: I will mention their names, and, as well as I am able, give a slight sketch of the several characters of such of them as cannot now be affected by either praise or blame: they were, the reverend Dr. Salter, father of the late master of the Charterhouse,—Dr. Hawkesworth,—Mr. Ryland a merchant, a relation of his,—Mr. John Payne then a bookseller, but now or very lately chief accountant of the bank,—Mr. Samuel Dyer a learned young man intended for the dissenting ministry,—Dr. William M'Ghie a Scots physician,—Dr. Edmund Barker, a young physician,—Dr. Richard Bathurst also a young physician, and myself.

Dr. Samuel Salter was a Cambridge divine, whom some disagreement between him and his children had driven from his abode at Norwich, at the age of seventy, to settle in London. Being thus far advanced in years, he could carry his recollection back to the time when Dr. Samuel Clarke was yet a member of that university, and would frequently entertain us with particulars respecting him. He was a dignitary of the church, I think archdeacon of Norfolk, a man of general reading, but no deep scholar: he was well-bred, courteous, and affable, and enlivened conversation by the relation of a variety of curious facts, of which his memory was the only register.

Dr. Hawkesworth is a character well known in the literary world: I shall not attempt a delineation of it, as I find in the biographic dictionary an article for him in the words following:

‘ John Hawkesworth, an English writer of a very
‘ soft

‘ soft and pleasing cast, was born about the year
 ‘ 1719, though his epitaph, as we find it in the
 ‘ Gentleman’s Magazine,” for August 1781, makes
 ‘ him to have been born in 1715. He was brought
 ‘ up to a mechanical profession, that of a watch-
 ‘ maker, as is supposed*. He was of the sect of pres-
 ‘ byterians, and a member of the celebrated Tom
 ‘ Bradbury’s meeting, from which he was expelled
 ‘ for some irregularities. He afterwards devoted
 ‘ himself to literature, and became an author of con-
 ‘ siderable eminence. In the early part of his life,
 ‘ his circumstances were rather confined. He resided
 ‘ some time at Bromley in Kent, where his wife kept
 ‘ a boarding-school. He afterwards became known
 ‘ to a lady, who had great property and interest in the
 ‘ East-India company; and, through her means,
 ‘ was chosen a director of that body. As an author,
 ‘ his ‘ Adventurer’ is his capital work; the merits of
 ‘ which, if we mistake not, procured him the degree
 ‘ of L. L. D. from Herring, archbishop of Canter-
 ‘ bury. When the design of compiling a narrative
 ‘ of the discoveries in the South seas was on foot, he
 ‘ was recommended as a proper person to be em-
 ‘ ployed on the occasion; but, in truth, he was not a
 ‘ proper person, nor did the performance answer ex-
 ‘ pectation. Works of taste and elegance, where ima-
 ‘ gination and the passions were to be affected, were
 ‘ his province; not works of dry, cold, accurate nar-
 ‘ rative. However, he executed his task, and is said

* This is a mistake. He had been taught no art but that of
 writing, and was a hired clerk to one Harwood an attorney in Gro-
 cers’ alley, in the Poultry.

‘ to have received for it the enormous sum of 6000l.
‘ He died in 1773, some say of high living, others,
‘ of chagrin from the ill reception of his ‘ Narrative :’
‘ for he was a man of the keenest sensibility, and ob-
‘ noxious to all the evils of such irritable natures.’

Mr. Samuel Dyer was the son of a jeweller of eminence in the city, who, by his ingenuity and industry had acquired a competent fortune. He, as also his wife, were dissenters, persons very religiously disposed, members of Chandler’s congregation in the Old Jewry, and this their youngest son was educated by professor Ward, at the time when he kept a private school in one of the alleys near Moorfields ; and from thence, being intended by his father for the dissenting ministry, was removed to Dr. Dodderidge’s academy at Northampton. After having finished his studies in this seminary, he was removed to Glasgow, where, under Dr. Hutcheson, he was instructed in the writings of the Greek moralists, and went through several courses of ethics and metaphysics. To complete this plan of a learned education, the elder Mr. Dyer, by the advice of Dr. Chandler, sent his son to Leyden, with a view to his improvement in the Hebrew literature under Schultens, a celebrated professor in that university. After two years’ stay abroad, Mr. Dyer returned, eminently qualified for the exercise of that profession to which his studies had been directed, and great were the hopes of his friends that he would become one of its ornaments. To speak of his attainments in knowledge, he was an excellent classical scholar, a great mathematician and natural philosopher, well versed in the Hebrew, and
master

master of the Latin, French and Italian languages. Added to these endowments, he was of a temper so mild, and in his conversation and demeanour so modest and unassuming, that he engaged the attention and affection of all around him. In all questions of science, Johnson looked up to him, and in his life of Watts, among the poets, has cited an observation of his, that Watts had ‘ confounded the idea of space ‘ with that of empty space, and did not consider that ‘ though space might be without matter, yet matter ‘ being extended, could not be without space.’

It was now expected that Mr. Dyer would attach himself to the profession for which so liberal and expensive an education was intended to qualify him, and that he would, under all the discouragements that attend non-conformity, appear as a public teacher, and by preaching give a specimen of his talents; and this was the more wished, as he was a constant attendant on divine worship, and the whole of his behaviour suited to such a character. But being pressed by myself and other of his friends, he discovered an averfeness to the undertaking, which we conceived to arise from modesty, but some time after found to have sprung from another cause.

In this seeming state of suspense, being master of his time, his friend Dr. Chandler found out for him an employment exactly suitable to his talents. Dr. Daniel Williams, a dissenting minister, who by marriage had become the owner of a very plentiful estate, and was the founder of the library for the use of those of his profession, in Redcross street, by his will had directed that certain controversial, and other religious tracts

tracts of his writing, should be translated into Latin, and printed the second year after his death, and five hundred of each given away, and this bequest to be repeated when that number was disposed of.

This part of his will had remained unexecuted from about the year 1715, and Dr. Chandler being a trustee for the performance of it, and empowered to offer an equivalent to any one that he should think equal to the undertaking, proposed it to Mr. Dyer, and he accepted it; but small was his progress in it before it began to grow irksome, and the completing of the translation was referred to some one less averse to labour than himself.

Having thus got rid of an employment to which no persuasions of his friends nor prospects of future advantage could reconcile him, he became, as it were, emancipated from the bondage of puritanical forms and modes of living. Mr. Dyer commenced a man of the world, and with a sober and temperate deliberation resolved on a participation of its pleasures and enjoyments. His company, though he was rather a silent than a talkative man, was courted by many, and he had frequent invitations to dinners, to suppers, and card-parties. By these means he became insensibly a votary of pleasure, and to justify this choice, had reasoned himself into a persuasion that, not only in the moral government of the world but in human manners, through all the changes and fluctuations of fashion and caprice, whatever is, is right. With this and other opinions equally tending to corrupt his mind, it must be supposed that he began to grow indifferent to the strict practice of religion, and
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the event shewed itself in a gradual declination from the exercises of it, and his easy compliance with invitations to Sunday evening parties, in which mere conversation was not the chief amusement.

In his discourse he was exceedingly close and reserved: it was nevertheless to be remarked of him, that he looked upon the restraints on a life of pleasure with an unapproving eye. He had an exquisite palate, and had improved his relish for meats and drinks up to such a degree of refinement, that I once found him in a fit of melancholy occasioned by a discovery that he had lost his taste for olives!

He was a man of deep reflection, and very able in conversation on most topics; and after he had determined on his course of life, which was, to be of no profession, but to become a gentleman at large, living much at the houses of his friends, he seemed to adopt the sentiments of a man of fashion. In a visit that he made with a friend to France, he met with a book with the title of 'Les Mœurs' with which he was greatly delighted, and at length became so enamoured of it, and that free and liberal spirit which it manifests, that, after a conflict with his natural indolence, in which he came off the victor, he formed a resolution to translate it into English; but after a small progress in the work, the enemy rallied, and defeated him. Cave was his printer, and had worked off only a few sheets when Mr. Dyer's stock of copy was exhausted, and his bookseller found himself reduced to the necessity of getting the translation finished by another hand, which he did, employing for the purpose a Mr. Collyer, the

author of 'Letters from Felicia to Charlotte,' and other innocent and some useful publications. The translation was completed, but upon its being sent abroad, met with a rival one that involved Cave, who was interested in the success of the book, in an advertisement-war, which he was left to conduct as he could.

Few who are acquainted with this book, will blame or wonder at Mr. Dyer's partiality for it. It is a work replete with good sense, setting forth the excellence and the reasonableness of moral virtue, in language so elegant and lively, and with such forcible persuasion, as cannot but win on a mind open to instruction.

The earl of Chesterfield's voluminous exhortations to his son have been, by some, esteemed a system of education, a system which sinks into nothing when compared, either in its foundation or tendency, to that contained in this concise code of ethics. His lordship teaches the baser arts as means to that important end, success in the world; this writer, that the good opinion of mankind is never to be purchased by deviating from the rule of right, and that we seek in vain for happiness, if we do not exert ourselves in the discharge of our several duties. Principles such as these, the disciples of the Graces are not likely to relish; but it is nevertheless true, that the unassuming, the benevolent author of 'Les Mœurs' understood the art of forming the character of a really fine gentleman, much better than he who taught that infamy was the road to honour. In short, this is a work, in praise of which there is no danger of being too lavish, for those must be wise indeed

indeed who are not informed by it, and incorrigible whose tempers are not mended by it.

What then shall we say of Mr. Dyer who could read it, approve it, and so far shake off his natural phlegm as to declare himself fascinated by, and actually begin a translation of it, yet could abandon his work, and sink into the very character against which it was an antidote, but that sloth had obtained the dominion over him, that a paralysis had seized his mental faculties, and that rejecting the prudent counsels, the moral precepts, and the religious instruction contained in this elegant tract, he had given himself up to criminal indolence and self-gratification, and defeated the hopes of his best friends?

In the translation into English, much of the spirit of the original has evaporated; but it has merit, as some particulars which the different manners of the two nations made it fit to alter, are properly adapted in it to the genius of our country, and indeed the translation, even if it had had less claim to our regard, must have been acceptable, as it extended the benefits of this valuable tract.

Dyer's support, in the idle way of life which he had made choice of, was the produce of a patrimony in the funds, that could not be great; his father, from whom he derived it, having left, besides himself, a widow, an elder son and a daughter. Johnson and myself, that he might be getting something, strongly pressed him to write the life of Erasmus; but he could not be induced to undertake it. A work of less labour, but less worthy of him, he was however prevailed on

by Mr. Samuel Sharp, the surgeon, to engage in: this was a revision of the old translation of Plutarch's lives by several hands. He undertook, and, with heavy complaints of the labour of his task, completed it, and had for his reward from Mr. Draper the partner of Mr. Tonson, whom Mr. Sharp had solicited to find some employment for him, the sum of two hundred pounds.

While he was a member of the club, Johnson suspected that his religious principles, for which at first he honoured him, were giving way, and it was whispered to me by one who seemed pleased that he was in the secret, that Mr. Dyer's religion was that of Socrates. What farther advances he made in Theism I could not learn, nor will I venture to assert, that which some expressions that I have heard drop from him led me to fear, viz. that he denied, in the philosophical sense of the term, the freedom of the human will, and settled in materialism and its consequent tenets.

As all his determinations were slow and deliberate, and seemed to be the result of reason and reflection, the change in his principles and conduct here noted was gradual. Of this the first symptoms were an imbecillity to resist any temptation abroad on a Sunday evening, that should ease him of the trouble of such exercises as he had been accustomed to perform in the family of his mother, and an eager curiosity in the perusal of books not merely of entertainment, but of such, as together with a knowledge of the world, furnished his mind with such palliatives of vice as made him half a convert to it.

While

While his mind was in this state of trepidation, a young gentleman who had been a fellow-student with him at Leyden, arrived in England, disordered in his health, of whom and whose conversation he became so enamoured, that to entertain him while he was seeking the recovery of it, Dyer was almost lost to all the rest of his friends. To those with whom he was most intimate, he would, notwithstanding the closeness of his nature, describe him and display his attractions, which as he represented them, were learning, wit, politeness, elegance, particularly in the article of dress; free and open manners, a genteel figure, and other personal charms that rendered him the delight of the female sex. It was a question that some of those with whom he was thus open would frequently ask him, 'What are the most of these qualifications to you, Mr. Dyer, who are a man of a different character? you who know the value of wisdom, and have a mind fraught with knowledge, which you are capable of applying to many beneficial purposes, can never be emulous of those distinctions which discriminate a man of pleasure from a philosopher:' his answers to which served only to shew that his judgment was corrupted: The habitation of his friend, whom he thus visited, was a brothel, and his disease such as those seldom escape who frequent houses of lewd resort. The sollicitude which the females in that place shewed for the recovery of his friend, their close attendance on him, and assiduity in administering to him his medicines, and supplying all his wants, he attributed to genuine love; and seemed almost to envy in him that power which could interest so many

young persons of the other sex in the restoration of his health.

What effect these visits, and the blandishments to which, as often as he made them, he was a witness, had upon Dyer, I know not, save that to defeat the enchantments of these syrens he practised none of the arts of Ulysses : on the contrary, they seemed to have wrought in him an opinion, that those mistook their interest, and shewed their ignorance of human life, who abstained from any pleasure that disturbed not the quiet of families or the order of society ; that natural appetites required gratification, and were not to be dismissed without it ; that the indulgence of the irascible passions alone was vice ; and that to live in peace with all mankind, and in a temper to do good offices, was the most essential part of our duty.

Having admitted these principles into his mind, he settled into a sober sensualist ; in a perfect consistency with which character, he was content to eat the bread of idleness, laying himself open to the invitations of those that kept the best tables, and contracting intimacies with men not only of opposite parties, but with some who seemed to have abandoned all principle, whether religious, political or moral. The houses of many such in succession were his home ; and for the gratifications of a well-spread table, choice wines, variety of company, card-parties, and a participation in all domestic amusements and recreations, the owners thought themselves recompensed by his conversation and the readiness with which he accommodated himself to all about him. Nor was he ever at a loss for reasons to justify this abuse of his parts or

waste of his time: he looked upon the practice of the world as the rule of life, and thought it did not become an individual to resist it.

By the death of his mother, his brother and sister, all of whom he survived, he became possessed of about 8000*l.* in the funds, which, as he was an œconomist and inclined to no extravagance, it seemed highly improbable he would ever be tempted to dissipate; but he had contracted a fatal intimacy with some persons of desperate fortunes, who were dealers in India stock, at a time when the affairs of the company were in a state of fluctuation; and though, from his indolent and abstracted temper of mind and ignorance of business, the last man to be suspected of yielding to such delusions, he first invested all he had in that precarious fund, and next became a candidate for the office of a director of the company, but failed in his attempt. After this, he entered into engagements for the purchase or sale of stock, and by violating them, made shipwreck of his honour. Lastly, he made other contracts of the like kind, to the performance whereof he was strictly bound: these turned out against him, and swallowed the whole of his fortune. About the time of this event he was seized with a quinsy, which he was assured was mortal; but whether he resigned himself to the slow operation of that disease, or precipitated his end by an act of self-violence, was, and yet is, a question among his friends. He left not in money or effects sufficient to defray the expence of a decent funeral, and the last office of humanity towards him was performed by one of those who had been necessary to his ruin. A por-

trait of him was painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and from it a mezzotinto was scraped, the print whereof, as he was little known, sold only to his friends; a singular use however was made of it: Bell, the publisher of the English poets, caused an engraving to be made from it, and prefixed it to the poems of Mr. John Dyer.

I have been thus particular in the history of this accomplished and hopeful young man, whom I once loved with the affection of a brother, with a view to shew the tendency of idleness, and to point out at what avenues vice may gain admittance in minds seemingly the most strongly fortified. The assailable part of his was laxity of principle: at this entered infidelity, which was followed by such temptations to pleasure as he could see no reason to resist: these led on desires after the means of gratification, and the pursuit of them was his destruction.

M^cGhie was a Scotchman by birth, and educated, in one of the universities of that country, for the profession of physic. In the rebellion in 1745, he, with a party of young men who, as volunteers, had associated on the side of government, bore arms, and was engaged in the skirmish at Falkirk, which he ever spoke of as an ill-conducted business. When matters were become pretty quiet in Scotland, he took a doctor's degree, and came to London, where, trusting to the friendship of his countrymen he hoped to succeed in practice, but the town was overstocked with Scotch physicians, and he met with small encouragement, though, by the favour of Dr. Benjamin Avery, the treasurer of Guy's hospital, who had
been

been a dissenting teacher, and at that time was at the head of that interest, he got to be elected one of the physicians of that charity. He was a learned, ingenious, and modest man ; and one of those few of his country whom Johnson could endure. To say the truth, he treated him with great civility, and may almost be said to have loved him. He inherited a patrimony too small for his subsistence, and failing in his hope of getting forward in his profession, died of a broken heart, and was buried by a contribution of his friends.

Barker, being by education a dissenter, was sent to study physic at Leyden, from whence he returned about the time I am speaking of. He was introduced to us by Dyer, and had been a fellow-student with him and with Akenfide, Askew, Munckley, Mr. Dyson of the house of commons, and others, few of whom are now living. From the conversation of these persons, he learned the principles of lord Shaftesbury's philosophy, and became, as most of them were, a favourer of his notions, and an acute reasoner on the subject of ethics. He was an excellent classical scholar, a deep metaphysician, and had enriched his fancy by reading the Italian poets ; but he was a thoughtless young man, and in all his habits of dress and appearance so slovenly as made him the jest of all his companions. Physicians in his time were used to be full dressed ; and in his garb of a full suit, a brown tye-wig with a knot over one shoulder, and a long yellow-hilted sword, and his hat under his arm, he was a caricature. In his religious principles he professed himself an unitarian, for which Johnson so often snubbed

snubbed him, that his visits to us became less and less frequent. After such a description as that above, it is needless to add that Barker succeeded ill in his profession. Upon his leaving us, he went to practise at Trowbridge in Wiltshire, but at the end of two years returned to London, and became librarian to the college of physicians, in the room of Edwards the ornithologist; but for some misbehaviour was displaced, and died in obscurity.

Dr. Richard Bathurst was a native of Jamaica, and the son of an eminent planter in that island, who coming to settle in England, placed his son in London, in order to qualify him for the practice of physic. In the course of his studies he became acquainted with Johnson, and was greatly beloved by him for the pregnancy of his parts and the elegance of his manners. Besides these he possessed the qualities that were most likely to recommend him in his profession; but, wanting friends, could make no way in it. He had just interest enough to be chosen physician to an hospital that was supported by precarious donations, and which yielded him little or no recompence for his attendance, which, as it was only a few hours on certain days in the week, left him, in a great measure, master of his time. Of this he was a good manager, employing it in the studies relative to his profession, and the improvement of himself in polite literature. In conjunction with Johnson, Hawkesworth, and others, he wrote 'the Adventurer,' a periodical paper that will hereafter be spoken of, pursuing at the same time the most prudent and probable methods for acquiring reputation and advancing himself in his profession; but missing of success, he embraced the
offer

offer of an appointment of physician to the army that was sent on the expedition against the Havannah, where, soon after his arrival, he was seized with a fever that then raged among the troops, and which, before he could be a witness of the reduction of the place, put a period to an innocent and useful life.

The Spaniards have a proverb, that he who intends to be pope must think of nothing else. Bathurst thought of becoming an eminent London physician, and omitted no means to attain that character: he studied hard, dressed well, and associated with those who were likely to bring him forward, but he failed in his endeavours, and shortly before his leaving England confessed to Johnson, that in the course of ten years' exercise of his faculty, he had never opened his hand to more than one guinea.

The failure of three such persons as those above-mentioned, in a profession in which very many ignorant men have been known to succeed *, was matter of wonder to Johnson and all that knew them. He obeyed that precept of Scripture, which exhorts us to honour the physician, and would frequently say of those of this country, that they did more good to mankind, without a prospect of reward, than any profession of men whatever. Bathurst's want of encouragement affected him much: he often expressed to me his surprize; that a young man of his endowments and engaging manners, should succeed no better, and his disappointment drew from him a reflection, which he has inserted in his life of Akenfide, that by an acute observer who had looked on the transactions of the

* So ignorant as to request of the college the indulgence of an examination in English.

medical world for half a century, a very curious book might be written on the fortune of physicians. Such a book I should be glad to see; and if any person hereafter shall be induced to pursue Johnson's hint, he may possibly think the following remarks which have occurred to me in the course of a long intimacy with some of the most eminent of the profession, not altogether beneath his notice.

Of the professors of medicine, in cities remote from London and in country towns, I know but little; but in the metropolis I am able to say, that in my time not only the track of a young physician was pretty plainly pointed out, and it is curious to follow it, but that the conduct of such an one was reducible to a system. Mead was the son of a non-conforming minister the teacher of a numerous congregation, who trusting to his influence over them*, bred his son a physician, with what success is well known†. He raised the medical character to such a height of dignity as was never seen in this or any other country. His example was an inducement with others of the dissenting ministers to make phy-

* The interest which the dissenting teachers had with the members of their several congregations, though now but little known, was formerly very great, and in my memory was such, that scarcely any member of a separate congregation would dispose of a daughter, or make a purchase, or advance a sum of money on a mortgage, without first consulting his pastor.

† I have heard it said, that when Mead began to practise, he was a constant frequenter of the meeting at Stepney, where his father preached; and that when he was sent for out of the assembly, which he often was, his father would in his prayer insert a petition in behalf of the sick person. I once mentioned this to Johnson, who said it was too gross for belief; but it was not so at Batson's: it passed there as a current tradition.

physicians

ficians of their sons. Oldfield, Clark, Nesbit, Lobb, and Munckley were the sons of dissenting teachers, and they generally succeeded. The hospital of St. Thomas, and that of Guy, in Southwark, were both under the government of dissenters and whigs; and as soon as any one became physician of either, his fortune was looked upon as made. The mention of this circumstance brings to my remembrance a contest, that, to a degree, proves the truth of my assertion. Dr. afterwards Sir Edward, Hulse had been some years physician to St. Thomas's hospital, and being minded to resign, had set his eye upon Dr. Joseph Letherland, a man of profound erudition, for his successor. Hoadly, bishop of Winchester, had about that time a son, who having finished his studies in physic at Cambridge, had taken his doctor's degree, and was about to settle in London. Hoadly was ever the idol of the whigs: he encouraged his son to offer himself, and the interest was divided. Every nerve was strained, and Hoadly missed his election by fewer than ten votes*.

The

* It is remarkable of this person, that upon this failure he abandoned his profession; not so much perhaps because of his disappointment, as of his principles. To a friend of mine he confessed that he was, as to the effects of medicine, a sceptic; for that upon the principles of philosophy, he could not account for the operation of any one medicine on the human body. He seemed in this instance to have adopted the sentiments of Montaigne, who entertained the same doubt, and, somewhere in his essays, describes a physician putting a pill into a patient's mouth, with a commission to follow the circulation, and act only on that part, the toe for instance, which it is directed. Of a different opinion was the father of
of

The same advantage attended the election of a physician to the hospitals of Bethlehem and St. Bartholomew, which are of royal foundation, and have been under tory government. By cultivating an interest with either of the two parties, the succession of a young physician was almost insured. The frequenting Batson's or Child's was a declaration of the side he took, and his business was to be indiscriminately courteous and obsequious to all men, to appear much abroad and in public places, to increase his acquaintance and form good connexions, in the doing whereof, a wife, if he were married, that could visit, play at cards, and tattle, was oftentimes very serviceable †. A candidate for practice, pursuing these methods and exercising the patience of a

of the person above-mentioned, 'Hoadly, bishop of Winchester, when, writing against the free-thinkers, he put this shrewd question: ' Were all the mistakes and errors of physicians, from the beginning of the world to this day, collected into a volume, ' would they afford a good reason against taking physic?'

† The medical character, whatever it is now, was heretofore a grave one: it implies learning and sagacity, and therefore, notwithstanding lord Shaftesbury's remark, that gravity is of the very essence of imposture, the candidates for practice, though ever so young, found it necessary to add to their endeavours a grave and solemn deportment, even to affectation. The physicians in Hogarth's prints are not caricatures; the full dress, with a sword and a great tye-wig, and the hat under the arm; and the doctors in consultation, each smelling to a gold-headed cane shaped like a parish-beadle's staff, are pictures of real life in his time, and myself have seen a young physician thus equipped, walk the streets of London without attracting the eyes of passengers.

setting-dog

setting-dog for half a score years in the expectation of deaths, resignations, or other accidents that occasion vacancies, at the end thereof either found himself an hospital physician *, and if of Bethlehem a monopolist of one, and that a very lucrative branch of practice; or doomed to struggle with difficulties for the remainder of his life.

Jurin, Shaw, James, and some few others, recommended themselves to practice by their writings, but in general the methods of acquiring it, I speak of the city, were such as are above described. One and only one of the profession I am able to name who pursued a different conduct, and under the greatest disadvantages succeeded.

This person was Dr. Meyer Schomberg, a native of Cologne, who being a jew, and as I have heard related of him, librarian to some person of distinction abroad,

* To these observations on the profession of physic, and the fate of its practitioners, I here add an anecdote of no less a person than Dr. Mead himself, who very early in his life attained to this station of eminence, and met with all the subsequent encouragement due to his great merit, and who nevertheless died in a state of indigence.

The income arising from his practice I have heard estimated at 7000*l.* a year, and he had one if not two fortunes left him, not by relations but by friends no way allied to him; but his munificence was so great, and his passion for collecting books, paintings, and curiosities, so strong, that he made no savings. His manuscripts he parted with in his life-time to supply his wants, which towards his end were become so pressing, that he once requested of the late lord Orrery the loan of five guineas on some toys, viz. pieces of kennel-coal wrought into vases and other elegant forms, which he produced from his pocket. This story, incredible as it may seem, lord Orrery told Johnson, and from him I had it.

left

left that occupation, and came and settled in London. Being of no profession, and having the means of a livelihood to seek, he was at a pause, but at length determined on one, and took it up in a manner that will be best described by his own words to a friend of mine. 'I said I was a physician.' Having thus assumed a profession, he cultivated an intimacy with the jews in Duke's place, and by their means got introduced to the acquaintance of some of the leading men, merchants and others of that religion, who employed him, and by their interest recommended him to a practice that, in a few years amounted, as he once told me himself, to a thousand pounds a year. He was a man of an insinuating address, and as he understood mankind very well, having renounced the ritual distinctions of his religion, he soon found out a method of acquiring popularity, which had never been practised by any of his profession; he took a large house in the city, and kept a public table, to which, on a certain day in the week, all the young surgeons and apothecaries were welcome, and at which all that were present were treated with an indiscriminate civility, that had very much the appearance of friendship, but meant nothing more than that they should recommend him to practice. The scheme succeeded; in the year 1740, Schomberg had outstripped all the city-physicians, and was in the annual receipt of four thousand pounds.

To enable him to practice, he had, at his setting out, procured to be admitted a licentiate of the college, but that permission had been granted him with so ill a grace, or was followed by some circumstances that provoked

provoked his resentment so highly, that he seemed resolved on a perpetual enmity against the members of that body; who, on their part, looking on him as little better than a foreign mountebank, declined, as much as possible, meeting him in consultation, and thereby, for some time, checked his practice.

He had a son whom he brought up to his own profession, who took it into his head, that having been admitted a licentiate, he was virtually a fellow, and claimed to be admitted as such: his father encouraged him, and instituted a process in his behalf, of which there had been no precedent since the time that Jefferies was chancellor. It was no less than a petition to the king, requesting him, in the person of the lord-chancellor, to exercise his visitatorial power over the college, and restore the licentiates to their rights, which, by their arbitrary proceedings, the president and fellows had, for a succession of ages, deprived them of. This petition came on to be heard at Lincoln's-inn hall, before the lord chief justice Willes, the lord chief-baron Smythe, and Sir John Eardley Wilmot, lords commissioners of the great seal, but the allegations therein contained not being sufficiently supported, the same was dismissed; it was nevertheless looked on as the most formidable attack on the college it had ever sustained, and may be said to have shaken its constitution to the very centre.

Political associations and religious sects are excellent nurseries to young men of professions, especially of that of which I am speaking; Ratcliffe and Freind owed their fortunes to the support of the tories and jacobites; Mead and Hulse to the whigs, and Schomberg to the jews. The quakers also, no contemptible

body of men, had power and interest sufficient to introduce into great practice one of their own denomination; this was John Fothergill, a young man of parts and industry, who being bred an apothecary, and having obtained a Scotch degree, settled in London, and attached himself to Schomberg, taking him, in many parts of his conduct, for his exemplar: so that, upon Schomberg's decease, he slid into his practice, and became one of the most popular of the city physicians. These two persons, first one, and then the other, for full thirty years, carried all before them; and within that space of time, not fewer than twenty of the profession, whom I could name, lived in great straits, some of them leaving, at their decease, scarce sufficient to bury them.

From these, and many other instances that might be produced, it is evident, that neither learning, parts, nor skill, nor even all these united, are sufficient to ensure success in the profession I am speaking of; and that, without the concurrence of adventitious circumstances, which no one can pretend to define, a physician of the greatest merit may be lost to the world; and further it may be said, that the fairest hopes may be frustrated by the want of that quality, which Swift somewhere calls an aldermanly virtue, discretion, but is in truth, of greater efficacy in our intercourse with mankind, than all science put together. Had Akenfide been possessed of this gift, he had probably become the first in his faculty; but that he was able to acquire no other kind of celebrity than that of a scholar and a poet, is to be accounted for by some particulars in his life and conduct, with which few but myself, who
knew

knew him well, are acquainted, and which I here insert as suppletory to those which Johnson has recorded of him. Mr. Dyson and he were fellow students, the one of law and the other of physic, at Leyden; where, being of congenial tempers, a friendship commenced between them that lasted through their lives. They left the university at the same time, and both settled in London: Mr. Dyson took to the bar, and being possessed of a handsome fortune supported his friend while he was endeavouring to make himself known as a physician; but in a short time, having purchased of Mr. Hardinge, his place of clerk of the house of commons, he quitted Westminster hall, and for the purpose of introducing Akenfide to acquaintance in an opulent neighbourhood near the town, bought a house at North-End, Hampstead; where they dwelt together during the summer season: frequenting the long room, and all clubs, and assemblies of the inhabitants.

At these meetings, which as they were not select, must be supposed to have consisted of such persons as usually meet for the purpose of gossiping, men of wealth, but of ordinary endowments, and able to talk of little else than news, and the occurrences of the day, Akenfide was for displaying those talents which had acquired him the reputation he enjoyed in other companies; but here they were of little use to him, on the contrary, they tended to engage him in disputes that betrayed him into a contempt of those that differed in opinion from him. It was found out that he was a man of low birth, and a dependant on Mr. Dyson; circumstances that furnished those whom he offended with a ground of re-

proach, that reduced him to the necessity of asserting in terms that he was a gentleman.

Little could be done at Hampstead after matters had proceeded to this extremity; Mr. Dyson parted with his villa at North-End, and settled his friend in a small house in Bloomsbury square; assigning for his support such a part of his income as enabled him to keep a chariot.

In this new situation Akenfide used every endeavour to become popular, but defeated them all by the high opinion he every where manifested of himself, and the little condescension he shewed to men of inferior endowments; by his love of political controversy, his authoritative censure of the public councils, and his bigotted notions respecting government, subjects foreign to his profession, and with which some of the wisest of it have thought it prudent not to concern themselves. In the winter evenings he frequented Tom's coffee-house in Devereux court, then the resort of some of the most eminent men for learning and ingenuity of the time, with some of whom he became entangled in disputes and altercations, chiefly on subjects of literature and politics, that fixed on his character the stamp of haughtiness and self-conceit, and drew him into disagreeable situations.

There was at that time a man of the name of Ballow, who used to pass his evenings in the society above-mentioned, a lawyer by profession*, but of no practice; he having, by the interest of some of the Townshends, to whom he had been a kind of law tutor, obtained a place in the exchequer, which yielded him a handsome

* He was the author of a treatise on equity, in folio, published without a name.

income,

income, and exempted him from the necessity of attending Westminster-hall. He was a man of deep and extensive learning, but of vulgar manners; and being of a splenetic temper, envied Akenfide for that eloquence which he displayed in his conversation, and set his own phraseology very low. Moreover he hated him for his republican principles; and finally, being himself a man of solid learning, affected to treat him as a pretender to literature, and made it his study to provoke him.

One evening at the coffee-house a dispute between these two persons rose so high, that for some expression uttered by Ballow, Akenfide thought himself obliged to demand an apology, which not being able to obtain, he sent his adversary a challenge in writing. Ballow, a little deformed man, well known as a faunterer in the park, about Westminster, and in the streets between Charing cross and the houses of parliament, though remarkable for a sword of an unusual length, which he constantly wore when he went abroad, had no inclination for fighting, and declined an answer. The demand of satisfaction was followed by several attempts on the part of Akenfide to see Ballow at his lodgings, but he kept close, till by the interposition of friends the difference could be adjusted*. By his conduct in this business,
Akenfide

* This method of resenting affronts offered to physicians is not new. The grave and placid Dr. Mead was once provoked to it by Dr. Woodward of Gresham college, who, in the exercise of his profession, had said or done something to offend him: he went to Woodward's lodgings to demand satisfaction, and meeting him under the arch in the way from the outer court to the green

Akenfide acquired but little reputation for courage, for the accommodation was not brought about by any concessions of his adversary, but by a resolution from which neither of them would depart, for one would not fight in the morning, nor the other in the afternoon: all that he got by it was, the character of an irascible man; and many who admired him for his genius and parts were shy of becoming his intimates. Yet where there was no competition for applause or literary reputation, he was an easy companion, and would bear with such rudeness as would have angered almost any one. Saxby, of the custom-house, who was every evening at Tom's, and by the bluntness of his behaviour, and the many shrewd sayings he was used to utter, had acquired the privilege of Therfites, of saying whatever he would, was once in my hearing, inveighing against the profession of physic, which Akenfide took upon him to defend. This railer, after labouring to prove that it was all imposture, concluded his discourse with this sentiment: 'Doctor,' said he, 'after all you have said, my opinion of the profession of physic is this, The ancients endeavoured to make it a science and failed; and the moderns to make it a trade and have suc-

court, drew his sword and bid him defend himself or beg pardon, which, it is supposed, he did. This rencounter is recorded in an engraved view of Gresham college, inserted in Dr. Ward's lives of the Gresham professors, in which Woodward is represented kneeling, and laying his sword at the feet of his antagonist; and was thus explained to me by Dr. Lawrence the physician. Mead was the friend and patron of Ward, which must be supposed to have been his inducement to perpetuate an event so foreign to the nature of his work.

‘ceeded.’

‘ceeded.’ Akenfide took this farcaſm in good part, and joined in the laugh which it occaſioned.

The value of that precept which exhorts us to live peaceably with all men, or in other words to avoid creating enemies, can only be eſtimated by the reflection on thoſe many amiable qualities againſt which the neglect of it will preponderate. Akenfide was a man of religion and ſtrict virtue, a philoſopher, a ſcholar, and a fine poet. His converſation was of the moſt delightful kind, learned, inſtructive, and without any affectation of wit, chearful and entertaining. One of the pleaſanteſt days of my life I paſſed with him, Mr. Dyſon, and another friend, at Putney bowling-green houſe, where a neat and elegant dinner, the enlivening ſunſhine of a ſummer’s day, and the view of an unclouded ſky, were the leaſt of our gratifications. In perfect good humour with himſelf and all around him, he ſeemed to feel a joy that he lived, and poured out his gratulations to the great diſpenſer of all felicity in expreſſions that Plato himſelf might have uttered on ſuch an occaſion. In converſations with ſelect friends, and thoſe whoſe courſe of ſtudy had been nearly the ſame with his own, it was an uſual thing with him in libations to the memory of eminent men among the ancients, to bring their characters into view, and thereby give occaſion to expatiate on thoſe particulars of their lives that had rendered them famous: his method was to arrange them into three claſſes, philoſophers, poets, and legiſlators.

That a character thus formed ſhould fail of recommending itſelf to general eſteem, and procure to the poſſeſſor of it thoſe benefits which it is in the power of

mankind to bestow, may seem a wonder, but it is often seen, that negative qualities are more conducive to this end than positive; and that, with no higher a character than is attainable by any one who with a studious taciturnity will keep his opinions to himself, conform to the practice of others, and entertain neither friendship for nor enmity against any one, a competitor for the good opinion of the world, nay for emoluments, and even dignities, stands a better chance of success, than one of the most established reputation for learning and ingenuity. The truth of this observation Akenfide himself lived to experience, who in a competition for the place of physician to the Charterhouse, was unable to prevail against an obscure man, devoid of every quality that might serve to recommend him, and whose sole merit was that of being distantly related to the late lord Holland.

To those persons who have been disappointed in their hopes of success in the medical profession, may be added one, to whom his failure was so far from being a misfortune, that it was the means of placing him in a station where only his worth could be known, and of exalting him to dignities in which he rendered more service to mankind, than he could have done in any other capacity whatever. This was Dr. Secker, the late archbishop of Canterbury; of whom I shall relate a few particulars not generally known.

We are told by the reverend authors of his life, prefixed to his sermons published by them, that he had been destined by his father for orders among the dissenters; but that not being able to decide on
some

some abstruse speculative doctrines, nor to determine absolutely what communion he should embrace, he applied himself to the study of physic. To this fact I add, that he was also a candidate for practice, and that in order to obtain it, he put on the garb of a physician; and for a year or somewhat more frequented Batson's coffee-house in the city, but had never any calls from thence*. His biographers abovementioned further say, that being recommended by Mr. afterwards bishop Butler, to Mr. Edward Talbot, a son of bishop Talbot; that gentleman promised in case he chose to take orders in the church, to engage his father to provide for him, and that foreseeing many obstacles in his pursuit of this profession, Mr. Secker, for he had not then obtained the degree of doctor in his faculty, embraced the offer. They add, that in the summer of 1720, he was introduced to Mr. Talbot, and that with him he cultivated a close acquaintance. This I conceive was not till after he had made the experiment abovementioned, and determined on the change of his profession. Mr. Talbot's recommendation of his friend to his father succeeded, but he lived not to see the fruit of it; for in a few months after, he was seized with the small-pox and died; which last particular agrees with the following, communicated to me by a person of unquestionable veracity; viz. that upon the first appearance of the disorder, the symptoms were very unfavourable, and it seemed necessary in order to assist the eruption, that some person should sleep in the same bed with the patient. Mr. Secker

* Ex relatione Peter Flood the master of the coffee-house, who remembered his coming there.

voluntarily

voluntarily undertook this office, and though it failed of success, gave a convincing proof of his gratitude to one whose friendship was likely to prove, as it afterwards did, the making of his fortunes.

To return from this digression, the club in Ivy lane, composed of the persons above described, was a great relief to Johnson after the fatigue of study, and he generally came to it with both a corporal and mental appetite; for our conversations seldom began till after a supper, so very solid and substantial, as led us to think, that with him it was a dinner. By the help of this refectory, and no other incentive to hilarity than lemonade, Johnson was, in a short time after our assembling, transformed into a new creature: his habitual melancholy and lassitude of spirit gave way; his countenance brightened; his mind was made to expand, and his wit to sparkle: he told excellent stories; and in his didactic stile of conversation, both instructed and delighted us.

It required, however, on the part of us, who considered ourselves as his disciples, some degree of compliance with his political prejudices: the greater number of our company were whigs, and I was not a tory, and we all saw the prudence of avoiding to call the then late adventurer in Scotland, or his adherents, by those names which others hesitated not to give them, or to bring to remembrance what had passed, a few years before, on Tower-hill. But the greatest of all our difficulties was, to keep alive in Johnson's mind a sense of the decorum due to the age, character, and profession of Dr. Salter, whom he took delight in contradicting, and bringing his learn-
ing

ing, his judgment, and sometimes his veracity to the test. And here I must observe, that Johnson, though a high-churchman, and by consequence a friend to the clergy as a body of men, was, with respect to individuals, frequently, not to say wanting in civility, but to a very great degree spleenetic and pertinacious. For this behaviour we could but one way account: He had been bred in an university, and must there have had in prospect those advantages, those stations in life, or perhaps those dignities, which an academic education leads to. Missing these by his adverse fortunes, he looked on every dignitary under a bishop, for to those of that order he was more than sufficiently respectful, and, to descend lower, on every one that possessed the emoluments of his profession, as occupying a station to which himself had a better title, and, if his inferior in learning or mental endowments, treated him as little better than an usurper.

Dr. Salter was too much a man of the world to resent this behaviour: 'Study to be quiet' seemed to be his rule; and he might possibly think, that a victory over Johnson in any matter of dispute, could it have been obtained, would have been dearly purchased at the price of peace. It was nevertheless a temerarious act in him to venture into a society, of which such a man was the head. Dean Swift in his character of Corusodes*, has so developed the arts by which mere men of the world attain to ecclesiastical dignities and preferments, as should make such for ever cautious how they risque detection; and accordingly we see that

* In his essay on the fates of clergymen.

many among them are in general backward in forming connections and associating with scholars and the learned of the laity, at least with men of Johnson's temper, who, where he had reason to expect learning, never shewed mercy to ignorance.

Hawkesworth was a man of fine parts, but no learning: his reading had been irregular and desultory: the knowledge he had acquired, he, by the help of a good memory retained, so that it was ready at every call, but on no subject had he ever formed any system. All of ethics that he knew, he had got from Pope's 'Essay on Man,' and Epistles; he had read the modern French writers, and more particularly the poets, and with the aid of Keill's Introduction, Chambers's Dictionary, and other such common books, had attained such an insight into physics, as enabled him to talk on the subject. In the more valuable branches of learning, he was deficient. His office of curator of the Magazine gave him great opportunities of improvement, by an extensive correspondence with men of all professions: it increased his little stock of literature, and furnished him with more than a competent share of that intelligence which is necessary to qualify a man for conversation. He had a good share of wit, and a vein of humour. With all these talents, Hawkesworth could be no other than an instructive and entertaining companion.

Of a far more valuable kind were the endowments of Dyer; keen penetration and deep erudition were the qualities that so distinguished his character, that, in some instances, Johnson might almost be said to have looked up to him. As the purpose of our meetings
was

was the free communication of sentiments, and the enjoyment of social intercourse, our conversations were unrestrained, and the subjects thereof multifarious. Dyer was a divine, a linguist, a mathematician, a metaphysician, a natural philosopher, a classical scholar, and a critic; this Johnson saw and felt, and never, but in defence of some fundamental and important truth, would he contradict him. The deference thus shewn by Johnson to Dyer, may be said to have been involuntary, or respect extorted; for in their religious and political sentiments their disagreement was so great, that less of it would, in some minds, have engendered hatred. Of the fundamental and important truths above-mentioned, there was one, namely the nature of moral obligation, of which Johnson was uniformly tenacious. Every one, versed in studies of this kind, knows, that there are, among the moderns, three sects or classes of writers on morality, who, though perhaps deriving their respective tenets from the Socratic, the Academic and other ancient schools, are, in these times, considered, at least, as the guides of sects; these are the characteristic lord Shaftesbury, Dr. Samuel Clarke, and Mr. Wollaston: the first of these makes virtue to consist in a course of action conformable to what is called the moral sense; Wollaston says it is acting, in all cases, according to truth, and treating things as they are; Dr. Clarke supposes all rational agents as under an obligation to act agreeably to the relations that subsist between such, or according to what he calls the fitness of things. Johnson was ever an admirer of Clarke, and agreed with him in this and most other of his opinions, excepting in that of the

Trinity, in which he said, as Dr. Bentley, though no very sound believer, had done before, that Dr. Waterland had foiled him. He therefore fell in with the scheme of fitness, and thereby professed himself an adversary, in the mildest sense of the word, and an opponent of Dyer, who, having been a pupil of Hutcheson, favoured, notwithstanding his suspected infidelity, this and many other notions and opinions of lord Shaftesbury.

To say of lord Shaftesbury that he was but a suspected infidel, is surely treating him mildly, and I forbear to tax him with unbelief, only because in his ‘Letters to a student at the University *,’ he has affected to speak of the Christian religion, as if half persuaded of its truth. Nevertheless, throughout his works it may be discerned, that he omits no opportunity of branding it with superstition and enthusiasm, and of representing the primitive professors of it as provoking, by their factious and turbulent behaviour, those persecutions from whence they derive the glory of martyrs. For these sentiments, as also for the invidious comparisons he is ever drawing between the

* A young man, named Michael Ainsworth, the son, as I have been informed, of the parish clerk of Winborne St. Giles in Dorsetshire, the seat of the Shaftesbury family, whom his lordship sent to and supported at Oxford, with a view of settling him in the church, and giving to it a divine of his own forming. His lordship, however, failed of his end: the young man, if not in his religious, in his political principles chose to think for himself; he might be as good a christian, but was not so good a whig as his patron intended him to be: he thereby lost his favour, and incurred the censure of ingratitude.

philosophers Plato, Epictetus, Seneca and others, and the fathers, and his many contemptuous sneers at the writers on the side of christianity, Johnson bore him no good will, neither did he seem at all to relish the cant of the Shaftesburian school, nor inclined to admit the pretensions of those who professed to be of it, to tastes and perceptions which are not common to all men; a taste in morals, in poetry, and prose-writing, in painting, in sculpture, in music, in architecture, and in government! a taste that censured every production, and induced them to reprobate every effort of genius that fell short of their own capricious standard*.

Little as Johnson liked the notions of lord Shaftesbury, he still less approved those of some later writers, who have pursued the same train of thinking and reasoning, namely, Hutcheson, Dr. Nettleton, and Mr. Harris of Salisbury, of which latter, for the many singularities of sentiment and style in his 'Hermes,' he scrupled not to speak very lightly. There is a book extant, intitled, 'Letters concerning Mind,' written by a person of the same school, named Petvin, which, with an arrow taken from the quiver of their great master, a stroke of ridicule

* See lord Shaftesbury's 'Letter on Design,' passim, in which these fanciful notions prevail, that a taste, an ear, a judgment, are the consequences of freedom, or civil liberty, and that not having attained to the perfection thereof, our ecclesiastical structures, particularly the metropolitan, retain much of what artists call the Gothic kind; and compare with it his own puerile devices, invented with great labour to illustrate the characteristics.

shot from one of the Idlers, Johnson may be fairly said to have transfixed. The passage is in a high degree ludicrous, and will, I am persuaded, justify the insertion of it here at length.

‘The author begins by declaring, that *the sorts of things are things that now are, have been, and shall be, and the things that strictly ARE.* In this position, except the last clause, in which he uses something of the scholastic language, there is nothing but what every man has heard, and imagines himself to know. But who would not believe that some wonderful novelty is presented to his intellect, when he is afterwards told, in the true *bugbear* style, that *the ares, in the former sense, are things that lie between the have-beens and shall-bees.* The have-beens are things that are past; the shall-bes are things that are to come; and the things that ARE, in the latter sense, are things that have not been, nor shall be, nor stand in the midst of such as are before them, or shall be after them. The things that have been, and shall be, have respect to present, past, and future. Those likewise that now ARE have moreover place; that, for instance, which is here, that which is to the east, that which is to the west.

‘All this, my dear reader, is very strange; but though it be strange, it is not new; survey these wonderful sentences again, and they will be found to contain nothing more than very plain truths, which, till this author arose, had always been delivered in plain language.’

That Dyer should be a friend to the doctrine of the moral sense, and to the other tenets of this school, is not

not to be wondered at, seeing that he was a pupil of Hutcheson, and that his were the opinions that prevailed at Glasgow, where he taught, and also at Leyden, whither Dyer and many of his fellow-students in that university, removed. Akenfide and Dyson, who were of the number, were deep in this scheme, and also abettors of that fanciful notion, that ridicule is the test of truth.

The topics above-mentioned were, not unfrequently, the subjects of altercation between Johnson and Dyer, in which it might be observed, as Johnson once did of two disputants, that the one had ball without powder, and the other powder without ball; for Dyer, though best skilled in the controversy, was inferior to his adversary in the power of reasoning, and Johnson, who was not always master of the question, was seldom at a loss for such sophistical arguments as the other was unable to answer.

In these disputations I had opportunities of observing what others have taken occasion to remark, viz. not only that in conversation Johnson made it a rule to talk his best, but that on many subjects he was not uniform in his opinions, contending as often for victory as for truth: at one time *good*, at another *evil* was predominant in the moral constitution of the world. Upon one occasion, he would deplore the non-observance of Good-Friday, and on another deny, that among us of the present age there is any decline of public worship. He would sometimes contradict self-evident propositions, such as, that the luxury of this country has increased with its riches; and that the practice of card-playing is more general than here-

tofore. At this versatility of temper, none, however, took offence ; as Alexander and Cæsar were born for conquest, so was Johnson for the office of a symposiarch, to preside in all conversations ; and I never yet saw the man who would venture to contest his right.

Let it not, however, be imagined, that the members of this our club met together, with the temper of gladiators, or that there was wanting among us a disposition to yield to each other in all diversities of opinion ; and indeed, disputation was not, as in many associations of this kind, the purpose of our meeting : nor were our conversations, like those of the Rota club, restrained to particular topics. On the contrary, it may be said, that with our gravest discourses was intermingled

‘ Mirth, that after no repenting draws,’

MILTON.

for not only in Johnson’s melancholy there were lucid intervals, but he was a great contributor to the mirth of conversation, by the many witty sayings he uttered, and the many excellent stories which his memory had treasured up, and he would on occasion relate ; so that those are greatly mistaken who infer, either from the general tendency of his writings, or that appearance of hebetude which marked his countenance when living, and is discernible in the pictures and prints of him, that he could only reason and discuss, dictate and controul.

In the talent of humour there hardly ever was his equal, except perhaps among the old comedians,
such

such as Tarleton, and a few others mentioned by Cibber. By means of this he was enabled to give to any relation that required it, the graces and aids of expression, and to discriminate with the nicest exactness the characters of those whom it concerned: In aping this faculty I have seen Warburton disconcerted, and when he would fain have been thought a man of pleasantry, not a little out of countenance.

I have already mentioned, that Johnson's motive for the institution of this society was, his love of conversation, and the necessity he found himself under of seeking relief from the fatigue of compiling his dictionary: the same necessity operated still farther, and induced him to undertake, what most other men would have thought an additional fatigue, the publishing a periodical paper. The truth is, that not having now for a considerable space committed to writing aught but words and their significations, his mind was become tumid, and laboured to be delivered of those many and great conceptions, which for years it had been forming. The study of human life and manners, had been the chief employment of his thoughts, and to a knowledge of these, all his reading, all his conversation, and all his meditations tended. By these exercises, and the aid of an imagination that was ever teeming with new ideas, he accumulated a fund of moral science, that was more than sufficient for such an undertaking, and became in a very eminent degree qualified for the office of an instructor of mankind in their greatest and most important concerns.

I am sensible of the contempt and ridicule with which those authors are treated by lord Shaftesbury, who, differing from his favourites the ancients, have preferred to their method of writing in soliloquy and dialogue, the more authoritative and didactic form of essays; but who knows not that the ways by which intelligence and wisdom may be communicated are many and various, and that Johnson has followed the best exemplars? What are the sapiential books in the Scriptures, and all collections of precepts and counsels, but moral essays, lessons of œconomical prudence, and rules for the conduct of human life?

In a full persuasion of the utility of this mode of instruction, it undoubtedly was, that Montaigne, lord Bacon, Osborne, Cowley, Sir William Temple, and others, in those excellent discourses, which they have not scrupled to term essays, have laid out their minds, and communicated to mankind that skill in worldly, and I will add, in heavenly prudence, which is scarcely attainable but by long experience, and an exercise both of the active and contemplative life; and to disseminate and recommend the principles and practice of religion and virtue; as also, to correct the lesser foibles in behaviour, and to render human intercourse easy and delightful, was the avowed design of those periodical essays, which, in the beginning of this century, contributed to form the manners of the then rising generation.

A long space had intervened since the publication of the Tatlers, Guardians, and Spectators: it is true it had been filled up by The Lover, and The Reader, The Theatre, The Lay-monastery, The Plain-dealer,
The

The Free-thinker, The Speculatist, The Cenfor, and other productions of the like kind; but of some of these it may be said, that they were nearly still-born, and of others, that they enjoyed a duration little more extended than that of the ephemeron: so that Johnson had no competitors for applause; his way was open, and he had the choice of many paths. Add to this, that a period of near forty years, in a country where commerce and its concomitant luxury had been increasing, had given rise to new modes of living, and even to characters that had scarcely before been known to exist. The clergyman was now become an amphibious being, that is to say, both an ecclesiastic and a laic; the stately stalking fop, whose gait, as Cibber describes it, resembled that of a peacock, was succeeded by a coxcomb of another species, a fidgeting, tripping animal, that for agility might be compared to a grasshopper; the shopkeeper was transformed into a merchant, and the parsimonious stock-broker into a man of gallantry; the apron, the badge of mechanic occupations, in all its varieties of stuff and colour, was laid aside; physicians and lawyers were no longer distinguishable by their garb; the former had laid aside the great wig, and the latter ceased to wear black, except in the actual exercise of their professions: in short, a few years of public tranquillity had transformed a whole nation into gentlemen.

In female life the refinements were also to be noted. In consequence of a better education than it had been usual to bestow on them, women were become proficient in literature, and a man might read a lady's letter without blushing at the spelling. The convenience

of turnpike-roads had destroyed the distinction between town and country manners, and the maid of honour and the farmer's wife put on a cap of the latest form, almost at the same instant. I mention this, because it may have escaped the observation of many, that a new fashion pervades the whole of this our island almost as instantaneously as a spark of fire illuminates a mass of gunpowder*.

These, it may be said, were but foibles in the manners of the times; but there were certain notions and opinions, which having been disseminated subsequent to

* The town-life had also received great improvements, which have since been further extended: public entertainments are now enjoyed in an immediate succession: from the play the company are generally able to get away by eleven, the hour of assembling at other places of amusement; from these the hour of retirement is three, which gives, till noon the next day, nine hours for rest; and after that sufficient time for a ride, auctions, or shopping, before five or six the dinner hour. Nor is this seeming indulgence and immoderate pursuit of pleasure so inconsistent with the attendance on public worship as it may seem: methodism, or something like it, in many instances, makes them compatible; so that I have known a lady of high rank enjoy the pleasures of a rout, that almost barred access to her house, on the evening of a Sunday which she had begun with prayer, and a participation of the solemnities which at an early hour in that day, are constantly celebrated at St. James's chapel.

For most of these refinements on our public diversions we are indebted to the late Mrs. Cornelys, to whose elegant taste for pleasure the magistrates of Turin and Brussels were so blind, and of her worth so insensible, that, as I was given to understand by intelligence communicated to me in my judicial capacity, they severally drove her out of both those cities: this hospitable country, however, afforded her an asylum; and in Westminster she was permitted to improve our manners, without any further interruption, than a presentment of her house as a nuisance, by a grand jury of the county,

to the publication of the last of the collections of essays above-mentioned, escaped their censure, and were now become principles that had mis-led many, and were likely to affect the moral conduct of the young and unthinking : these had for their authors and propagators such men as Collins, Mandeville†, Morgan and Tindal ; the first pair deists, and the latter infidels. And to these I might add, though I would not brand

county, which, had it been prosecuted, it might have been my lot to try ; but by the aid of her friends she found means to smother it. Soon after, she became a prisoner for debts to a large amount ; but in the riots in 1780 found means to escape from confinement, and has never since been heard of.

† Mandeville, whose christian name was Bernard, was a native of Dort in Holland. He came to England young, and, as he says in some of his writings, was so pleased with the country, that he took up his residence in it, and made the language his study. He lived in obscure lodgings in London, and betook himself to the profession of physic, but was never able to acquire much practice. He was the author of the book above-mentioned, as also of ‘ Free Thoughts on Religion,’ and ‘ a Discourse on Hypochondriac Affections,’ which Johnson would often commend ; and wrote besides, fundry papers in the ‘ London Journal,’ and other such publications, to favour the custom of drinking spirituous liquors, to which employment of his pen, it is supposed he was hired by the distillers. I once heard a London physician, who had married the daughter of one of that trade, mention him as a good sort of man, and one that he was acquainted with, and at the same time assert a fact, which I suppose he had learned from Mandeville, that the children of women addicted to dram-drinking, were never troubled with the rickets. He is said to have been coarse and overbearing in his manners where he durst be so ; yet a great flatterer of some vulgar Dutch merchants, who allowed him a pension. This last information comes from a clerk of a city attorney, through whose hands the money passed.

them with so harsh an appellation as the last, Toland, Gordon, Trenchard, and others of that class of writers, men who having drank the lees of the Bangorian controversy, were become so intoxicated in their notions of civil and religious liberty, as to talk of the majesty of the people! and shewed themselves anxious that their zeal for religion might be estimated by their jealousy of all establishments for the support of it.

The flimsy arguments contained in Collins's discourse on Free-thinking, had been refuted with great learning and pleasantry by Bentley, before which time, as I have been informed, a clergyman in his habit, walking the streets of London, was in danger of being affronted; but the poison of Mandeville had affected many. His favourite principle is, the title to the most noted of all his books, 'Private vices, public benefits,' throughout which he labours to inculcate, as a subordinate position, this other, that man is a selfish being, and that all that we call human beneficence is to be accounted for upon principles that exclude the love of any but ourselves*.

Johnson has remarked, that malevolence to the clergy is seldom at a great distance from irreverence for religion. He saw the features of that malevolence

* Lord Macclesfield, when chief-justice, was used often to have him at his house, and was pleased with his conversation. He once got Mr. Addison to meet him, of whom being asked his opinion by his lordship, Mandeville answered, he thought him a parson in a tye-wig. See Johnson's life of Addison among the Lives of the Poets.

in the writings of these men, and the point at which free-thinking was likely to terminate; and taking up the defence of religion where Mr. Addison left it, he made it a part of his design as well to adduce new arguments for its support, and to enforce the practice of virtue, as to correct those errors in the smaller concerns and occupations of life, the ridiculing which rendered his paper an amusement.

In this situation and state of public manners Johnson formed the plan of his Rambler, and with what spirit he entered upon it may be inferred from the following solemn address, which he composed and offered up to the divine Being for a blessing on the undertaking:

‘ Almighty God, the giver of all good things, without whose help all labour is ineffectual, and without whose grace all wisdom is folly; grant, I beseech Thee, that in this undertaking thy holy spirit may not be withheld from me, but that I may promote thy glory, and the salvation of myself and others: grant this, O Lord, for the sake of thy son Jesus Christ. Amen.’

The work was undertaken without the communication of his design to any of his friends, and consequently without any desire of assistance from them; it was from the stores of his own mind alone that he hoped to be able to furnish that variety of matter which it would require; which, that it might at no time fail him, he kept up by noting in a commonplace book that he carried about him, such incidents, sentiments, and remarks on familiar life and manners as were for his purpose. This method of accumulating

ing intelligence had been practised by Mr. Addison, and is humourously described in one of the Spectators, wherein he feigns to have dropped his paper of Notanda, consisting of a diverting medley of broken sentences and loose hints, which he tells us he had collected, and had meant to make use of. Much of the same kind is Johnson's Adversaria, as will appear by the following specimens :

‘ HEREDIPETA born heir presumptive to great
 ‘ fortune. — Had two uncles and an aunt. — Eldest
 ‘ un. squire and fox-hunter ; other a sea captain grown
 ‘ rich, — Mother a citizen's daughter. — Father an
 ‘ attorney, always told me of the riches to be gotten
 ‘ by pleasing unk. — Made a sycophant early — Hunt-
 ‘ ed, found hares, caught fish, with the elder — asked
 ‘ the other his adventures, foreign countries. Wished
 ‘ I was bred to sea — taken at word “ no land lubber
 ‘ should” [have] “his money.” Went to sea. During
 ‘ voyage eldest fell in hunting died — Estate came
 ‘ to his brother — He married aunt's maid, the
 ‘ grossness of his behaviour cutting off from equals.
 ‘ Only aunt remains — now haunted by a half pay
 ‘ officer, or officer of the guards, a young gentleman
 ‘ with a place at court, a rich widower without
 ‘ children, &c. — The time spent in which I should
 ‘ have acquired the means of living — Folly of this
 ‘ kind of dependence — Every man should live by
 ‘ his own powers. Flattery — slavery — defeated at
 ‘ length by footman — chambermaid — or peevishness
 ‘ or caprice of age. Ideas — hunting — cards —
 ‘ sailing — sailors fate any mansion. Thus from
 ‘ 3 fortunes uncertain of any, indeed disabled from
 ‘ getting

‘ getting with credit or enjoying with dignity. Pa-
 ‘ rents folly who instead of animating children initiate
 ‘ them in servility. N.

Vive tibi, nam moriere tibi.

‘ Aunt a card-player — when not at hunting play’d
 at cards.’

In the above article we discern the rudiments of two
 most excellent papers, in the Rambler, number 197,
 and 198, the design whereof is to describe and ridicule
 the folly of legacy-hunting.

Here follows another, in which is contained the
 hints from which he formed that humorous relation
 of a Journey in a Stage Coach, given in the Adven-
 turer, Number 84.

‘ At Gravesend waiting for the coaches — Ad-
 ‘ ventures not of five hours but half one — Each
 ‘ entered the room with haughtiness — Each fat
 ‘ silent not with reverence but contempt — At last
 ‘ the red coat, what o’clock — Watch — not go
 ‘ well — cost 40l. — Grave man calls for the news
 ‘ — Price of stocks, sold out 40,000l. Red coat
 ‘ silent — Only one that escaped contempt, a young
 ‘ woman who wanted a service, was going down
 ‘ and was very officious to serve the company. Red
 ‘ coat wondered at our silence, told us how much he
 ‘ loved to be on a level with his company. — I Wo-
 ‘ man, hard for women of any condition to wait so
 ‘ long in public — informed that she was a ser-
 ‘ vant maid married to a trader. Another observed
 ‘ how frequently people of great figure were in such
 ‘ places

‘ places in disguise, and the pleasure of sometimes appearing below ourselves.

‘ Jam vaga profiliet frænis natura remotis.

‘ How hard (dixit quædam) for people used to their own coaches to ride in mixed company *.

• The collection above-mentioned contains also Johnson’s own opinions, sentiments on several subjects, and among them the following on writers for bread, from whence we learn his genuine sentiments of that profession ;

‘ Quid expedit Pſittacus,

‘ Reasons of writing, benevolence, desire of fame, vanity, hunger, curiosity to know the rate of a man’s own understanding, Which most justifiable. All may be forgiven if not persisted in, but writing for bread most, *Rich talk without excuse*, Rosc. If write well, not less innocent or laudable than prescribing — pleading — judging — fighting, transacting public affairs, much better than cringing, carrying a white staff or voting. If ill, fails with less hazard to the public than others. The prescriber — pleader — judge hurt others. He only bookseller who will not venture much upon a new name. Controversy suspicious, if more to be got on one side yet argument the same.

‘ The greatest writers have’ [written] ‘ for bread — Homer — Shakespear — Dryden — Pope. Fatui non famæ — Degente de fatu et affame d’argent.

‘ Inconveniences of this life. To the public ; the press is croud- ed with many books, yet this may diffuse knowledge, and leaves less room for vanity, sometimes it may choak the way to letters, and hinder learning but rarely. To themselves most inconven- feldom above want, endless labour, always a new work, sub- scriptions solicited, shameless importunity, meanness, patrons and encouragers to be got, wretched obsequiousness, companions of polite follies, vices, dedication, hateful flattery, utmost ambition or hope small place, youth of labour, old age of dependence. This place often not got, Gay.

Being

Being thus stored with matter, Johnson proceeded to publish his paper; and the first number came abroad on Tuesday the twentieth day of March, 1750.

It was the office of a cenfor of manners to curb the irregularities into which, in these new modes of living, the youthful of both sexes were apt to fall, and this he endeavoured to effect by gentle exhortation, by sober reproof, and, not seldom, by the powers of wit and ridicule; but with what success, others are as well able to tell as myself; however, if that is to be judged of by the sale of the paper, it was doubtless great, for though its reception was at first cool, and its progress slow, the world were too wise to suffer it to sink into oblivion: it was collected into volumes, and it would be too much for any one to say, that ten impressions of twelve hundred and fifty each, of a book fraught with the soundest precepts of œconomical wisdom, have been disseminated in vain.

On the first publication of the Rambler it met with a few readers who objected to it for certain particularities in the style, which they had not been used to in papers of the like kind, new and original combinations of words, sentences of an unusual form, and words derived from other languages, though accommodated to the genius of our own; but for these such reasons are assigned in the close of the last paper, as not only are a defence of them, but shew them to be improvements of our language.

Of singularity it may be observed, that, in general, it is originality, and therefore not a defect, and that all is not tumidity which men of little and confined reading please to call so. It is from a servile

imitation of others, and the use of whole phrases and sentences, and customary combinations of words, that the variety of styles is not nearly as great as that of faces. The vulgar opinion is, that the style of this century is the perfection of our language, and that we owe its ultimate and final improvement to Mr. Addison, and when we make his cold and languid periods the test, it is no wonder if we mistake strength and animation for tumidity.

And here I cannot but remark the error and misfortune of those who are blind to the excellencies of style that occur in the works of many English prose writers of the last century, which are rejected for no better a reason, than that in them we sometimes meet with words not now in common use. A reader ignorant of the state of our language at different periods, and not conversant with the writings of ages long past, is an incompetent judge of the subject, and his opinion of styles of no weight or value. Such a one we may suppose hardly restrained from censuring the style of our liturgy, compiled for the most part so long ago as the reign of Edward the sixth, and the antiquated phrase of the state-papers in the Cabala, the Burleigh, Sidney and Strafforde collections, notwithstanding they severally contain the most perfect models of precatory eloquence and civil negociation.

I find an opinion gaining ground not much to the advantage of Mr. Addison's style, the characteristics whereof are feebleness and inanity. I speak of that alone, for his sentiments are excellent and his humour exquisite. In some instances he adopts vulgar phrase, as when he calls an indiscreet action *a piece* of folly, and too often uses the expletive adverb *along*, thus,
Come

Come *along* with me. Yet I am not willing to deprive him of the honour implied in Johnson's testimony, 'that his prose is the model of the middle style;' but if he be but a mediocrity, he is surely not a subject of imitation; it being a rule, that of examples the best are always to be selected.

That Johnson owed his excellence as a writer to the divines and others of the last century, myself can attest, who have been the witness of his course of reading, and heard him declare his sentiments of their works. Hooker he admired for his logical precision, Sanderfon for his accuteness, and Taylor for his amazing erudition; Sir Thomas Browne for his penetration, and Cowley for the ease and unaffected structure of his periods. The tinsel of Sprat disgusted him, and he could but just endure the smooth verbosity of Tillotson. Hammond and Barrow he thought involved, and of the latter that he was unnecessarily prolix.

It may perhaps be thought, as his literary acquaintance was extensive, and the toil of compiling his dictionary very great, that Johnson was helped in the publication of the Rambler by the communications of others; but this was not the fact, he forbore to solicit assistance, and few presumed to offer it, so that in the whole series of those papers, we know with certainty of only four that were not of his own writing. Of these, No. 30, was sent him by Mrs. Catherine Talbot, daughter of Mr. Edward Talbot herein before spoken of; No. 97, by Mr. Richardson, the author of *Clarissa*, and numbers 44 and 100, by Mrs. Elizabeth Carter of Deal, a lady to whose reputation for learning, and

and the most estimable qualities of her sex, no praise of mine can make any addition. Hence arises that uniformity of subject and sentiment which distinguishes the Rambler from other papers of the like kind; but how great must its merit be, when wanting the charm of variety and that diversity of characters, which, by the writers of them, was thought necessary to keep attention awake, it could support itself to the end, and make instruction a substitute for amusement! Nor can this defect, if it be any, be deemed a deviation from Johnson's original purpose, which was not so much to instruct young persons of both sexes in the manners of the town, as in that more important science, the conduct of human life; it being certain, that he had it in his power as well to delight as to instruct his readers; and this he has in some instances done, not only by the introduction of fictitious characters and fancied portraits, but by ironical sarcasms and original strokes of wit and humour, that have, perhaps, excited more smiles than the writings of many, whose chief purpose it was, like that of L'Estrange and others, to make their readers merry.

And hence we may take occasion to observe, the error of those who distinguish so widely between men of study and reflection, and such as are hackneyed in the ways of the world, as to suppose the latter only qualified to instruct us in the offices of life. Lord Chesterfield, in his letters to his son, takes every occasion to express his hatred of an university education, to brand it with pedantry, and to declare that it unfits a man for social intercourse. Some have asserted, that travelling is the only means to attain a
knowledge

knowledge of mankind ; and the captain in Swift, in a less extensive view of human life, swears that

- ‘ To give a young gentleman right education,
- ‘ The army’s the very best school in the nation.’

To say the truth, there are numbers of men who contemn all knowledge derived from books, and prefer to it what they call turning over the great volume of the world. I had once a gardener that could not endure the mention of Miller’s dictionary, and would contend with me, that ‘ practice was every thing ;’ and innumerable are the instances of men who oppose mother-wit to acquired intelligence, and had rather grope their way through the world, than be indebted for instruction to the researches of others. Such men as these, in situations they have not been accustomed to, are ever awkward and diffident ; and it is for a reason nearly a-kin to this, that few rakes are able to look a modest woman in the face. On the contrary, the attainments of Johnson were such as, notwithstanding his home-breeding, gave him confidence, and qualified him for the conversation of persons of all ranks, conditions, characters, and professions, so that no sooner had the Rambler recommended itself to the favour of the public, and the author was known to be of easy access, than his acquaintance was sought, and even courted, by persons, of whom many, with all the improvement of travel, and the refinements of court-manners, thought that somewhat worth knowing was to be learned from the conversation of a man, whose fortunes and course of life had precluded him from the like advantages.

Johnson's talent for criticism, both preceptive and corrective, is now known and justly celebrated; and had he not displayed it in its utmost lustre in his *Lives of the Poets*, we should have lamented that he was so sparing of it in the *Rambler*, which seemed to be a vehicle, of all others the most proper, for that kind of communication. An eulogium on Knolles's *History of the Turks*, and a severe censure of the 'Samson Agonistes' of Milton are the only critical essays there to be found; to the latter he seems to have been prompted by no better a motive, than that hatred of the author for his political principles which he is known to have entertained, and was ever ready to avow. What he has remarked of Milton in his *Lives of the Poets* is undoubtedly true: he was a political enthusiast, and, as is evident from his panegyric on Cromwell, a base and abject flatterer. His style in controversy was sarcastic and bitter, and not consistent with christian charity; and though his apologists endeavour to defend him by the practice of the times, there were in his time better exemplars than he chose to follow, the writings of Jewel, Mede, Hooker, Dr. Jackson, and others, his predecessors in religious and political controversy; nor does he seem in his private character to have possessed many of those qualities that most endear men to each other. His friends were few, Andrew Marvel, Marchmont Needham, and the younger Vane; and Cyriac Skinner, Harrington, Henry Nevil, John Aubrey, and others, members of that crack-brained assembly the Rota-club, all republicans; and there is reason to suspect, from the sternness of his temper, and the rigid discipline of his family,

family, that his domestic manners were far from amiable, and that he was neither a kind husband nor an indulgent parent. But neither these nor those other qualities that rendered him both a bitter enemy and a railing disputant, could justify the severity of Johnson's criticism on the above-mentioned poem, nor apologize for that harsh and groundless censure which closes the first of his discourses on it, that it is 'a tragedy which ignorance has admired, and bigotry applauded.'

The reflection on that enmity of Johnson towards Milton, which I have above remarked, leads me to mention another instance of it, which about this time fell under my observation. A man of the name of Lauder, a native of Scotland, and educated in the university of Edinburgh, had, for reasons that will hereafter be given, conceived a hatred against the memory of Milton, and formed a scheme to convict him of plagiarism, by shewing that he had inserted in the *Paradise Lost* whole passages taken from the writings of fundry modern Latin poets, namely, Masenius the jesuit, Taubman a German professor, the editor of Virgil, and joint editor with Gruter of Plautus, Staphorstius a Dutch divine, and other writers less known; and of this crime he attempted to prove him guilty, by publishing instances in forged quotations, inserted from time to time in the '*Gentleman's Magazine*,' which not being detected, he made additions to, and again published in a volume intitled '*An Essay on Milton's use of and imitation of the moderns in his Paradise Lost, dedicated to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge*, 8vo. 1750.' While the book was in the

press, the proof sheets were submitted to the inspection of our club, by a member of it who had an interest in its publication, and I could all along observe that Johnson seemed to approve, not only of the design but of the argument, and seemed to exult in a persuasion, that the reputation of Milton was likely to suffer by this discovery. That he was not privy to the imposture I am well persuaded, but that he wished well to the argument must be inferred from the preface, which indubitably was written by Johnson.

The charges of plagiarism contained in this production, Lauder has attempted to make out by citations to a very great number, from a Latin poem of Jacobus Masenius a jesuit, intitled, ‘*Palæstra ligatæ eloquentiæ*,’ from the ‘*Adamus exul*’ of Grotius, the ‘*Triumphus Pacis*’ of Caspar Staphorstius a Dutchman, from the Latin poems of Caspar Barlæus, and the works of many other writers. For a time the world gave credit to them, and Milton’s reputation was sinking under them, till a clergyman of great worth, learning and industry, Mr. now Dr. John Douglas, prompted at first by mere curiosity, set himself to find out and compare the parallel passages, in the doing whereof he discovered, that in a quotation from Staphorstius, Lauder had interpolated eight lines taken from a Latin translation of the *Paradise Lost*, by a man named Hogæus or Hog, and opposed them to the passage in the original, as evidence of Milton’s plagiarism. Proofs of the like fraud in passages cited from Taubman and many others are produced by Dr. Douglas; but a single instance of the kind would have been sufficient to blast the credit of his adversary.

Having

Having made these discoveries, Dr. Douglas communicated them to the world in a pamphlet intitled, ‘Milton vindicated from the charge of plagiarism, brought against him by Mr. Lauder, &c. 8vo. 1750.’ Upon the publication thereof his booksellers called on Lauder for a justification of themselves, and a confirmation of the charge; but he, with a degree of impudence not to be exceeded, acknowledged the interpolation of the books by him cited, and seemed to wonder at ‘the folly of mankind in making such a rout about eighteen or twenty lines.’ However, being a short time after convinced by Johnson and others, that it would be more for his interest to make an ample confession of his guilt, than to set mankind at defiance, and stigmatize them with folly; he did so in a letter addressed to Mr. Douglas, published in quarto, 1751, beginning thus:

‘Candour and tenderness are in any relation, and on all occasions, eminently amiable; but when they are found in an adversary, and found so prevalent as to overpower that zeal which his cause excites, and that heat which naturally increases in the prosecution of argument, and which may be in a great measure justified by the love of truth, they certainly appear with particular advantages; and it is impossible not to envy those who possess the friendship of him, whom it is even some degree of good fortune to have known as an enemy.

‘I will not so far dissemble my weakness, or my fault, as not to confess, that my wish was to have passed undetected; but since it has been my fortune to fail in my original design, to have the suppositious

‘ passages which I have inserted in my quotations
‘ made known to the world, and the shade which
‘ began to gather on the splendour of Milton totally
‘ dispersed, I cannot but count it an alleviation of my
‘ pain, that I have been defeated by a man who
‘ knows how to use advantages with so much mode-
‘ ration, and can enjoy the honour of conquest with-
‘ out the insolence of triumph.

‘ It was one of the maxims of the Spartans, not to
‘ press upon a flying army, and therefore their enemies
‘ were always ready to quit the field, because they
‘ knew the danger was only in opposing. The civi-
‘ lity with which you have thought proper to treat
‘ me, when you had incontestable superiority, has in-
‘ clined me to make your victory complete, without any
‘ further struggle, and not only publicly to acknowledge
‘ the truth of the charge which you have hitherto ad-
‘ vanced, but to confess, without the least dissimula-
‘ tion, subterfuge, or concealment, every other inter-
‘ polation I have made in those authors, which you
‘ have not yet had opportunity to examine.

‘ On the sincerity and punctuality of this confession,
‘ I am willing to depend for all the future regard of
‘ mankind, and cannot but indulge some hopes, that
‘ they whom my offence has alienated from me, may,
‘ by this instance of ingenuity and repentance, be pro-
‘ pitiated and reconciled. Whatever be the event, I
‘ shall at least have done all that can be done in re-
‘ paration of my former injuries to Milton, to truth,
‘ and to mankind, and entreat that those who shall
‘ continue implacable, will examine their own hearts,
‘ whether they have not committed equal crimes with-
‘ out equal proofs of sorrow, or equal acts of atonement.’

Then

Then follow the citations, some of which appear to be gratuitous, that is to say, such as had escaped the detection of the author's adversary.

He then proceeds to assign the motive for his attempt to subvert the reputation of Milton, in these words :

‘ About ten years ago, I published an edition of
 ‘ Dr. Johnston’s Translation of the Psalms, and having
 ‘ procured from the general assembly of the church
 ‘ of Scotland, a recommendation of its use to the
 ‘ lower classes of grammar-schools, into which I had
 ‘ begun to introduce it, though not without much
 ‘ controversy and opposition, I thought it likely that
 ‘ I should, by annual publications, improve my little
 ‘ fortune, and be enabled to support myself in free-
 ‘ dom from the miseries of indigence. But Mr. Pope,
 ‘ in his malevolence to Mr. Benson, who had distin-
 ‘ guished himself by his fondness for the same ver-
 ‘ sion, destroyed all my hopes by a distich*, in which
 ‘ he places Johnston in a contemptuous comparison
 ‘ with the author of Paradise Lost.

‘ From this time, all my praises of Johnston be-
 ‘ came ridiculous, and I was censured with great
 ‘ freedom, for forcing upon the schools an author,
 ‘ whom Mr. Pope had mentioned only as a foil to a
 ‘ better poet. On this occasion, it was natural not to
 ‘ be pleased, and my resentment seeking to discharge
 ‘ itself somewhere, was unhappily directed against

* On two unequal crutches propt, he [Benson] came,
 Milton’s on this, on that one Johnston’s name.

Dunciad, book iv. line 109.

‘ Milton. I resolved to attack his fame, and found
‘ some passages in cursory reading, which gave me
‘ hopes of stigmatizing him as a plagiarist. The far-
‘ ther I carried my search, the more eager I grew for
‘ the discovery, and the more my hypothesis was op-
‘ posed, the more I was heated with rage. The con-
‘ sequence of my blind passion, I need not relate;
‘ it has, by your detection, become apparent to man-
‘ kind. Nor do I mention this provocation as
‘ adequate to the fury which I have shewn, but
‘ as a cause of anger less shameful and reproachful
‘ than fractious malice, personal envy, or national
‘ jealousy.’

The concluding paragraph of this confession carries in it such an appearance of contrition, that few who read it at the time could withhold that forgiveness which it implores; these are the words of it:

‘ For the violation of truth, I offer no excuse, be-
‘ cause I well know, that nothing can excuse it. Nor
‘ will I aggravate my crime, by dissingenuous pallia-
‘ tions. I confess it, I repent it, and resolve, that my
‘ first offence shall be my last. More I cannot per-
‘ form, and more therefore cannot be required. I
‘ intreat the pardon of all men, whom I have by any
‘ means induced to support, to countenance, or pa-
‘ tronize any frauds, of which I think myself obliged
‘ to declare, that not one of my friends was conscious.
‘ I hope to deserve by better conduct and more
‘ useful undertakings, that patronage which I have
‘ obtained from the most illustrious and venerable
‘ names by misrepresentation and delusion, and to
‘ appear hereafter in such a character, as shall give
‘ you

you no reason to regret, that your name is frequently mentioned with that of,

‘ Reverend Sir,

‘ Your most humble servant,

‘ WILLIAM LAUDER.’

Notwithstanding this humiliating and abject confession, which, though it was penned by Johnson*, was subscribed by himself, Lauder had the impudence, in a postscript thereto, in effect to retract it, by pretending that the design of his essay was only to try how deeply the prepossession in favour of Milton was rooted in the minds of his admirers; and that the stratagem, as he calls it, was intended to impose only on a few obstinate persons; and, whether that was so criminal as it has been represented, he leaves the impartial mind to determine.

After the publication of this letter, the perusers of it rested in a conviction of the villainy of its author, strengthened by the inconsistency between the reasons assigned in that and those in the postscript. Nevertheless, in the year 1754, resolving to attack Milton in another quarter, Lauder published a pamphlet intitled, ‘ King Charles I. vindicated from the charge of
‘ plagiarism brought against him by Milton, and
‘ Milton himself convicted of forgery and a gross
‘ imposition on the public.’ The design of this pamphlet was, to ingratiate himself with the friends to the memory of Charles by shewing, that the prayer of Pamela, in Sir Philip Sidney’s Arcadia, was, by an artifice of Milton, inserted in an edition of the Eikon Basilike, with a view to fix on the king a charge of impiety.

* Vide infra, the account of a subsequent publication of Lauder’s.

With this question I meddle not; I have only to observe upon Lauder's pamphlet, that the argument is introduced by a defence of his essay, and an assertion, that his letter, which he says was written by Johnson, in many respects contained not his sentiments, and was, more properly than an apology, an enormous aggravation of his offence; and is pursued with a declaration of the author, in the sincerity of his heart, that had not Milton with such unparalleled malignity blasted the king, he would not upon any consideration have either offered a violence to truth, put an imposition on the public, though but for a moment, or attempted to blast Milton's reputation by a falsehood.

Behold here a reason far differing from each of the two former; the first was a provocation given him by a distich of Mr. Pope's, the second was a desire by a stratagem, as he calls it, to try how far the partiality of Milton's admirers would lead them, and this last is, his resentment of an injury done to the memory of king Charles the first. If we ask, which of these is the true one? the answer must be, neither; for it appears that Lauder had projected an edition of Mase-nius and other of the Latin poets referred to in his essay, and that in order to obtain subscriptions for the same, he had been guilty of the wickedness imputed to and proved upon him.

The concluding paragraph of this last pamphlet of Lauder, as it is for its impudence matchless, I here give, and in the doing thereof consign his memory to that infamy, which, by his complicated wickedness he has incurred.

‘ As

‘ As for his [Milton’s] plagiarisms, I intend shortly,
 ‘ God willing, to extract such genuine proofs from
 ‘ those authors who held forth the lighted torch to
 ‘ Milton, I mean, who illustrated the subject of the
 ‘ Paradise Lost, long before that prince of plagiaries
 ‘ entered upon it, as may be deemed sufficient, not
 ‘ only to replace the few interpolations, (for which I
 ‘ have been so hideously exclaimed against) but even
 ‘ to reinforce the charge of plagiarism against the
 ‘ English poet, and fix it upon him by irrefragable
 ‘ conviction in the face of the whole world, and by the
 ‘ suffrage of all candid and impartial judges, while
 ‘ sun and moon shall endure, to the everlasting shame
 ‘ and confusion of the whole idolatrous rabble of his
 ‘ numerous partizans, particularly, my vain-glorious
 ‘ adversary, who will reap only the goodly harvest of
 ‘ disappointment and disgrace, where he expected to
 ‘ gather laurels.’

In 1756, Dr. Douglas published a new edition of
 his pamphlet, with the title of ‘ Milton no plagiarist,
 ‘ or a detection of the forgeries contained in Lauder’s
 ‘ essay on the imitations of the moderns in the Paradise
 ‘ Lost:’ to this is an appendix, containing part of an
 apology of Lauder’s booksellers, for having been the
 publishers of his essay, in which they give an account
 of their conduct, after the first discovery of his villainy,
 in the following words: ‘ An immediate application
 ‘ to Lauder was necessary, as well to justify ourselves,
 ‘ as to remove or confirm the charge. Accordingly,
 ‘ we acquainted him, that if he did not instantly put
 ‘ into our hands the books from which he had taken
 ‘ the principal passages, we would publicly disclaim
 ‘ all

‘ all connexion with him, and expose his declining
‘ the only step left for his defence. This declaration
‘ brought him to us the following day, when, with
‘ great confidence, he acknowledged the interpolation
‘ of all the books; and seemed to wonder at mankind
‘ in making such a rout about eighteen or twenty
‘ lines. As this man then has been guilty of such
‘ a wicked imposition upon us, our friends, and the
‘ public, and is capable of so daring an avowal of it,
‘ we declare, that we will have no farther intercourse
‘ with him, and that we now sell his book only as a
‘ curiosity of fraud and interpolation, which all the
‘ ages of literature cannot parallel!’

With a character thus blasted, it was next to impossible for this man to continue in England; he therefore left it, and went to settle at Barbadoes, proposing to set up a school there; but, upon his arrival on the island, he met with small encouragement, and is said to have died about the year 1771.

As Johnson, though not in the least an accessory to the imposture above related, had a considerable share in the controversy that it gave rise to, it seemed to me necessary to be thus particular in giving such an account thereof as would concentrate into one point all that was written on the subject, and convey to posterity the history of a transaction, the like whereof is not to be found among the records of literature. It is too sad a truth, that learning and rectitude of mind are qualities independent of each other, and that the world has in all ages abounded with examples of men of great erudition who have been wanting in common honesty. We read of men who have corrupted

rupted the Holy Scriptures with a view to favour a particular heresy ; and of monks who have forged charters to promote the secular interests of their fraternity : these, though wicked actions, must be supposed to have sprung from a principle, which, having for its object a common benefit, had somewhat of generosity in it : but the motives of this impostor were all of the selfish kind, revenge for a supposed injury done to himself, and an impatience to be relieved from his own peculiar and personal wants and distresses ; and though it was for some time thought that his confession had atoned for his offence, we find it was in fact an aggravation of it : In as much as it was not sincere, it was a repentance to be repented of ; and indeed in one sense he seems to have thought so, for, in his last publication, he retracts it, and that nothing might be wanting to fill up the measure of his iniquity, he defies his detector, whose endeavours were to beget in him that sense of shame which, as it is ever the forerunner of penitence, has ever been deemed salutary.

Great thanks are due to this learned divine and eminent scholar for the zeal and industry manifested by him in the course of this singular controversy, and every judicious reader must rejoice, that through his means our great poet has been rescued from an infamous charge, and that we may yet read the 'Paradise Lost' without a suspicion of its originality.

To return to Johnson, I have already said that he paid no regard to time or the stated hours of refection, or even rest ; and of this his inattention I will here relate a notable instance. Mrs. Lenox, a lady now well known
in

in the literary world, had written a novel intitled, 'The life of Harriot Stuart,' which in the spring of 1751, was ready for publication. One evening at the club, Johnson proposed to us the celebrating the birth of Mrs. Lenox's first literary child, as he called her book, by a whole night spent in festivity. Upon his mentioning it to me, I told him I had never sat up a whole night in my life; but he continuing to press me, and saying, that I should find great delight in it, I, as did all the rest of our company, consented. The place appointed was the Devil tavern, and there, about the hour of eight, Mrs. Lenox and her husband, and a lady of her acquaintance, now living, as also the club, and friends to the number of near twenty, assembled. Our supper was elegant, and Johnson had directed that a magnificent hot apple-pye should make a part of it, and this he would have stuck with bay-leaves, because, forsooth, Mrs. Lenox was an authoress, and had written verses; and further, he had prepared for her a crown of laurel, with which, but not till he had invoked the muses by some ceremonies of his own invention, he encircled her brows. The night passed, as must be imagined, in pleasant conversation, and harmless mirth, intermingled at different periods with the refreshments of coffee and tea. About five, Johnson's face shone with meridian splendour, though his drink had been only lemonade; but the far greater part of us had deserted the colours of Bacchus, and were with difficulty rallied to partake of a second refreshment of coffee, which was scarcely ended when the day began to dawn. This phenomenon began to put us in mind of our reckoning; but

but the waiters were all so overcome with sleep, that it was two hours before we could get a bill, and it was not till near eight that the creaking of the street-door gave the signal for our departure.

My mirth had been considerably abated by a severe fit of the tooth-ach, which had troubled me the greater part of the night, and which Bathurst endeavoured to alleviate by all the topical remedies and palliatives he could think of; and I well remember, at the instant of my going out of the tavern-door, the sensation of shame that affected me, occasioned not by reflection on any thing evil that had passed in the course of the night's entertainment, but on the resemblance it bore to a debauch. However, a few turns in the Temple, and a breakfast at a neighbouring coffee-house, enabled me to overcome it.

In the foregoing pages I have assigned the motives that induced Johnson to the institution of the club, and the writing of the Rambler; and here I may add, that his view in both was so far answered, as that the amusements they afforded him contributed, not only to relieve him from the fatigue of his great work the dictionary, but that they served to divert that melancholy, which the public now too well knows was the disease of his mind. For this morbid affection, as he was used to call it, no cause can be assigned; nor will it gratify curiosity to say, it was constitutional, or that it discovered itself in his early youth, and haunted him in his hours of recreation; and it is but a surmise that it might be a latent concomitant of that disease, which, in his infancy, had induced his mother to seek relief from the royal touch. His
own

own conjecture was, that he derived it from his father, of whom he was used to speak as of a man in whose temper and character melancholy was predominant. Under this persuasion, he at the age of about twenty, drew up a state of his case for the opinion of an eminent physician in Staffordshire, and from him received an answer, ‘ that from the symptoms ‘ therein described, he could think nothing better ‘ of his disorder, than that it had a tendency to insanity ; and without great care might possibly terminate in the deprivation of his rational faculties.’ The dread of so great a calamity was one inducement with him to abstain from wine at certain periods of his life, when his fears in this respect were greatest ; but it was not without some reluctance that he did it, for he has often been heard to declare, that wine was to him so great a cordial, that it required all his resolution to resist the temptations to ebriety.

It was fortunate for the public, that during a period of two years, the depression of his mind was at no time so great as to incapacitate him for sending forth a number of the Rambler on the days on which it became due ; nor did any of the essays or discourses therein contained, either in the choice of subjects or the manner of treating them, indicate the least symptom of drooping faculties or lassitude of spirit. Nevertheless, whether the constant meditation on such topics as most frequently occur therein, had not produced in his mind a train of ideas that were now become uneasy to him, or whether, that intenseness of thought which he must have exerted, first, in the conception, and next, in the delivery of such

original

original and noble sentiments as these papers abound with, had not made the relaxation of his mind necessary, he thought proper to discontinue the Rambler at a time when its reputation was but in its dawn.

The paper in which this his resolution is announced, is that of March 14, 1752, which concludes the work. As he had given his readers no warning of his intention, they were unprepared for the shock, and had the mortification to receive the tidings and the blow at the same instant, with the aggravation of a sympathetic melancholy, excited by the mournful expressions with which he takes his leave. And though he affects to think the reasons for discontinuing the publication a secret to his readers, it is but too apparent that it was written in the hours of dejection, and that the want of assistance and encouragement was not the weakest of his motives. Of the former of these two he had surely no right to complain, for he was so far from being ever known to wish for assistance, that his most intimate friends seemed to think it would have been presumption to offer it. The want of encouragement indeed might be a justifiable cause of discontent, for I have reason to think that the number of papers taken off hardly amounted to five hundred on any of the days of publication. Nevertheless, the slow circulation of the paper was to be accounted for by other reasons than that the author was never a favourite with the public, a reflection that would have been but excusable, had his imitations of Juvenal become waste paper, or his Irene, instead of being suffered to run nine nights, been consigned to oblivion on the first;

for it must be considered, that the merits of the Rambler were of a kind not likely to recommend it to those who read chiefly for amusement, and of readers, this class will ever be by much the most numerous: the subjects therein discussed are chiefly the weightiest and most important, respecting more our eternal than temporal happiness; and that these were the obstacles to the progress of his paper, himself has unawares confessed in his apology for the conduct of it. ‘I have never,’ says he, ‘complied with temporary curiosity, nor enabled my readers to discuss the topic of the day. I have rarely exemplified my assertions by living characters; in my papers no man could look for censures of his enemies or praises of himself; and they only were expected to peruse them, whose passions left them leisure for abstracted truth, and whom virtue could please by its naked dignity.’

Towards the close of this last paper, he seems to refer to ‘the final sentence of mankind,’ with a sort of presage, that one more deliberate than that to which he was submitting might be more favourable to his labours. He little thought at this time to what length the justice of mankind would go; that he should be a witness to the publication of the tenth edition of the Rambler, or that his heart would ever be dilated, as his friends can testify it was, with the news of its being translated into the Russian language.

Much might be said in commendation of this excellent work; but such suffrages as those here mentioned set it almost above praise. In the author’s own
opinion

opinion it was less estimable than in that of his judges: some merit indeed he claims for having enriched his native language, but in terms so very elegant and modest, that they at once hold forth an exemplar, and convey an apology. ‘I have laboured,’ says he, ‘to refine our language to grammar and purity, and to clear it from colloquial barbarisms, licentious idioms, and irregular combinations. Something perhaps I have added to the elegance of its construction, and something to the harmony of its cadence. When common words were less pleasing to the ear, or less distinct in their signification, I have familiarized the terms of philosophy by applying them to popular ideas, but have rarely admitted any word not authorized by former writers.’—With what success these endeavours of his have been attended is best known to those who have made eloquence their study; and it may go far towards the stamping a lasting character of purity, elegance, and strength on the style of Johnson, to say, that some of the most popular orators of this country now living, have not only proposed it to themselves as a model for speaking, but for the purpose of acquiring the cadence and flow of his periods, have actually gotten whole essays from the Rambler by heart.

The concluding paragraph of his farewell paper is so very awful, that I cannot resist the temptation to insert it, and the rather for that it seems to have been written under a persuasion, that Almighty God had been propitious to his labour, and that the solemn address to him which he had composed and offered up, on occasion of his engaging in it, had been heard, and was likely to be accepted.

‘ The essays professedly serious, if I have been able
 ‘ to execute my own intentions, will be found ex-
 ‘ actly conformable to the precepts of Christianity,
 ‘ without any accommodation to the licentiousness
 ‘ and levity of the present age. I therefore look
 ‘ back on this part of my work with pleasure, which
 ‘ no praise of man shall diminish or augment. I
 ‘ shall never envy the honours which wit and learn-
 ‘ ing obtain in any other cause, if I can be num-
 ‘ bered among the writers who have given ardour
 ‘ to virtue, and confidence to truth :

‘ Celestial pow’rs ! that piety regard,
 ‘ From you my labours wait their last reward.’

The Rambler, thus published in numbers, was not suffered to be lost to the world, or to sink into oblivion. As soon as, by the conclusion of it, it became a complete work, it was collected into volumes, and printed in Scotland *, and, soon after, also here, and obtained such favour with the public, as was an inducement with Dr. Hawkesworth to an undertaking of the same kind, the publication of a periodical paper called ‘ The Adventurer.’ For the carrying on such a work as this, Hawkesworth, though he possessed but a small stock of learning, was more than meanly qualified. He had excellent natural parts, and, by reading the modern English and French authors, had acquired a style, which, by his acquaintance with Johnson he had improved into a very good one. He wrote verses, that is to say in English, with ease

* In this edition a translation of the mottos by Mr. Elphinston is given.

and fluency, and was better acquainted with the world than most men are who have been bred to no profession.

The subjects of these papers, like those of the Rambler, are human life and manners, with a mixture of humour and instructive pleasantry, criticism, and moral and religious exhortation, too various, it must be supposed, for the powers of a single person: they are therefore the produce of different pens, and may owe their merit, in a great measure, to that diversity. The curiosity of the reader is, to a small degree, gratified by the last paper, which assigns to their author, Dr. Joseph Warton, such as have a certain signature, and leaves to Dr. Hawkesworth himself the praise of such as are without any. To the information there given, I add, that the papers marked A. which are said to have come from a source that soon failed, were supplied by Dr. Bathurst, an original associate in the work, and those distinguished by the letter T. by Johnson*.

The first number of the Adventurer made its appearance on Tuesday, November 7, 1752, and on that week-day, and also on Saturdays, it continued to be published, till the ninth of March 1754. To point out the many excellent essays contained in it is needless, as they are now collected into volumes, and together with the Rambler form a system of moral and œconomical institution; two of them are to be looked on as curiosities in different ways, Dr. Warton's remarks on 'King Lear' and 'the Tempest,' the most

* That Johnson was the writer of the papers signed T, I assert on the authority of his Adversaria, in which are the original hints of many of them in his own hand-writing.

learned and judicious critiques in the English language, and the account of a native of Scotland, called Admirable Crichton, dictated from memory by Johnson to Hawkefworth.

As Johnson expected to be believed whenever he either spoke or wrote, he has not vouchsafed to cite any authority for the incredible relation, which the Adventurer contains, of the personal and mental endowments of a man who is described as a monster both of erudition and prowess, and in every other view of his character is represented as having passed the limits of humanity. That he had no authority for what he has related of him, would be too much to say, after he has asserted, that he had such as was incontestible, yet having that, he has kept within the bounds of it, and cast a veil over that blaze of glory, which, to gaze on in its naked splendour, would not dazzle but blind the beholder.

Johnson's account, for his I must call it for a reason above given, is in these words:

‘ Among the favourites of nature, that have from
‘ time to time appeared in the world, enriched with
‘ various endowments and contrarieties of excellence,
‘ none seems to have been more exalted above the
‘ common rate of humanity, than the man known
‘ about two centuries ago by the appellation of the
‘ Admirable Crichton; of whose history, whatever
‘ we may suppress as surpassing credibility, yet we
‘ shall, upon incontestable authority, relate enough to
‘ rank him among prodigies.

“ Virtue,” says Virgil, “ is better accepted when
“ it comes in a pleasing form :” the person of Crichton was eminently beautiful; but his beauty was
‘ consistent

‘ consistent with such activity and strength, that in
 ‘ fencing, he would spring at one bound the length
 ‘ of twenty feet upon his antagonist; and he used
 ‘ his sword in either hand with such force and dex-
 ‘ terity, that scarce any one had courage to engage
 ‘ him.

‘ Having studied at St. Andrew’s in Scotland, he
 ‘ went to Paris in his twenty-first year, and affixed
 ‘ on the gate of the college of Navarre a kind of
 ‘ challenge to the learned of that university, to dis-
 ‘ pute with him on a certain day; offering to his
 ‘ opponents, whoever they should be, the choice of
 ‘ ten languages, and of all the faculties and sciences.
 ‘ On the day appointed, three thousand auditors
 ‘ assembled, when four doctors of the church and
 ‘ fifty masters appeared against him; and one of his
 ‘ antagonists confesses, that the doctors were de-
 ‘ feated, that he gave proofs of knowledge above
 ‘ the reach of man, and that a hundred years pass-
 ‘ ed without food or sleep, would not be sufficient
 ‘ for the attainment of his learning. After a dis-
 ‘ putation of nine hours, he was presented by the
 ‘ president and professors with a diamond and a
 ‘ purse of gold, and dismissed with repeated accla-
 ‘ mations.

‘ From Paris he went away to Rome, where he
 ‘ made the same challenge, and had, in the presence
 ‘ of the pope and cardinals, the same success. After-
 ‘ wards he contracted at Venice an acquaintance with
 ‘ Aldus Manutius, by whom he was introduced to the
 ‘ learned of that city; then visited Padua, where he
 ‘ engaged in another public disputation, beginning

his performance with an extemporal poem in praise of the city and the assembly then present, and concluding with an oration equally unpremeditated in commendation of ignorance.

He afterwards published another challenge, in which he declared himself ready to detect the errors of Aristotle and all his commentators, either in the common forms of logic, or in any which his antagonists should propose of a hundred different kinds of verse.

These acquisitions of learning, however stupendous, were not gained at the expence of any pleasure which youth generally indulges, or by the omission of any accomplishment in which it becomes a gentleman to excel: he practised, in great perfection, the arts of drawing and painting; he was an eminent performer in both vocal and instrumental music; he danced with uncommon gracefulness; and on the day after his disputation at Paris, exhibited his skill in horsemanship before the court of France, where, at a public match of tilting, he bore away the ring upon his lance fifteen times together.

He excelled likewise in domestic games of less dignity and reputation; and in the interval between his challenge and disputation at Paris, he spent so much of his time at cards, dice, and tennis, that a lampoon was fixed upon the gate of the Sorbonne, directing those that would see this monster of erudition, to look for him at the tavern.

So extensive was his acquaintance with life and manners, that in an Italian comedy, composed by himself,

‘ himself, and exhibited before the court of Mantua,
 ‘ he is said to have personated fifteen different cha-
 ‘ racters; in all which he might succeed without
 ‘ great difficulty, since he had such power of reten-
 ‘ tion, that once hearing an oration of an hour, he
 ‘ would repeat it exactly, and in the recital follow
 ‘ the speaker through all his variety of tone and ges-
 ‘ tication.

‘ Nor was his skill in arms less than in learning,
 ‘ or his courage inferior to his skill: there was a
 ‘ prize-fighter in Mantua, who travelling about the
 ‘ world, according to the barbarous custom of that
 ‘ age, as a general challenger, had defeated the most
 ‘ celebrated masters in many parts of Europe; and
 ‘ in Mantua, where he then resided, had killed three
 ‘ that appeared against him. The duke repented that
 ‘ he had granted him his protection; when Crichton,
 ‘ looking on his sanguinary success with indignation,
 ‘ offered to stake fifteen hundred pistoles, and mount
 ‘ the stage against him. The duke, with some re-
 ‘ luctance, consented, and, on the day fixed, the com-
 ‘ batants appeared: their weapons seem to have
 ‘ been single rapier, which was then newly intro-
 ‘ duced in Italy. The prize-fighter advanced with
 ‘ great violence and fierceness, and Crichton con-
 ‘ tented himself calmly to ward his passes, and suffered
 ‘ him to exhaust his vigour by his own fury: Crichton
 ‘ then became the assailant; and pressed upon him
 ‘ with such force and agility, that he thrust him
 ‘ thrice through the body, and saw him expire: he
 ‘ then divided the prize he had won, among the
 ‘ widows whose husbands had been killed.

‘ The

‘ The death of this wonderful man I should be
‘ willing to conceal, did I not know that every rea-
‘ der will enquire curiously after that fatal hour,
‘ which is common to all human beings, however
‘ distinguished from each other by nature or by
‘ fortune.

‘ The duke of Mantua having received so many
‘ proofs of his various merit, made him tutor to his
‘ son Vincentio di Gonzaga, a prince of loose man-
‘ ners and turbulent disposition. On this occasion it
‘ was, that he composed the comedy in which he ex-
‘ hibited so many different characters with exact
‘ propriety. But his honour was of short continuance,
‘ for as he was one night in the time of Carnival
‘ rambling about the streets with his guitar in his
‘ hand, he was attacked by six men masked. Nei-
‘ ther his courage nor skill, in this exigence deserted
‘ him : he opposed them with such activity and spirit,
‘ that he soon dispersed them, and disarmed their
‘ leader, who throwing off his mask, discovered him-
‘ self to be the prince his pupil. Crichton falling
‘ on his knees, took his own sword by the point, and
‘ presented it to the prince, who immediately seized
‘ it, and instigated, as some say, by jealousy, accord-
‘ ing to others, only by drunken fury and brutal re-
‘ sentment, thrust him through the heart.

‘ Thus was the Admirable Crichton brought into
‘ that state, in which he could excel the meanest
‘ of mankind only by a few empty honours paid to
‘ his memory : the court of Mantua testified their
‘ esteem by a public mourning ; the contemporary
‘ wits were profuse of their encomiums ; and the
‘ palaces

‘ palaces of Italy were adorned with pictures representing him on horseback, with a lance in one hand and a book in the other.’

The above account is so defective in the evidences of historical verity, that it has been by some suspected to be fabulous. It is true, that in essays of such a kind as that which contains this eulogium, it is not usual, for that would be to incur the charge of pedantry, to cite authorities; nevertheless, the circumstances of time and place seem so necessary in the relation of every uncommon event, and in the description of every extraordinary person, that the omission of both in this instance, as also the christian name of the person celebrated, can hardly be excused.

To supply these defects I might refer the reader to authorities, that fix the place of his birth at Clunie in the shire of Perth in Scotland, the year thereof at 1551, and that of his death 1583; and that tell us also, that Crichton's name of baptism was James; and as to the facts enumerated in the *Adventurer*, they seem to be sufficiently authenticated to all the purposes of historical information, in a book written in 1652, by Sir Thomas Urquhart*, bearing this
strange

* This singular person, whose name is sometimes written Urchard, was a physician of the house of Cromarty in Scotland, a man of learning, and the first translator into English of the works of Rabelais. In the time of the rebellion in Scotland, Temp. Car. 1. he was a fierce opponent of the presbyterian establishment, and taking, as we may suppose, an active part against it, was made a prisoner of war, and though enlarged on his parole, endured many hardships. Besides the book above-mentioned, he wrote fundry tracts, which have lately been collected and published in one volume

strange title, 'ΕΚΣΚΥΒΑΛΑΥΡΟΝ, or the discovery
 ' of a most exquisite jewel more precious than dia-
 ' monds in chased in gold, the like whereof was never
 ' seen in any age; found in the kennel of Worcester-
 ' streets, the day after the fight, and six before the
 ' autumnal equinox 1651.'

In this book is contained a memorial of fundry
 illustrious persons of Scotland, serving to vindicate
 the honour of that nation, but written in such a
 style of learned tumidity and bombast, as is not to
 be paralleled in any book now extant. I here cite
 from it two passages respecting Crichton as specimens
 thereof, and as proofs of Johnson's discretion in veiling
 the effulgence of a character too bright to be viewed
 in its genuine lustre.

' It happening on a Shrove-Tuesday at night, that
 ' this ever-renowned *Crichtoun*, (who, in the after-
 ' noon

lume octavo, one whereof is intitled, ' The true pedigree and
 ' lineal descent of the most ancient and honourable family of
 ' Urquhart in the house of Cromarty, from the creation of the
 ' world till the year 1652,' in which we are not more astonished to
 meet with a long succession of names, for the most part purely
 Greek, than to find such minute particulars recorded, as neither
 history nor tradition was ever before known to obtrude upon poste-
 rity.

For instance, speaking of one of his ancestors named Eformun,
 who he says lived A. M. 810, and married Narfesia; he tells this
 most incredible tale: ' He was sovereign prince of Achaia. For
 ' his fortune in the wars, and affability in conversation, his subjects
 ' and familiars surnamed him ἐφοιάετος, that is, fortunate and well-
 ' beloved. After which time, his posterity ever since hath ac-
 ' knowledged him the father of all that carry the name of URQU-
 ' HART. He had for his arms three banners, three ships, and
 ' three

‘ noon of that day, at the desire of my lord duke
 ‘ (the whole court striving which should exceed
 ‘ other in foolery, and devising of the best sports to
 ‘ excite laughter; neither my lord, duchess, nor prince,
 ‘ being exempted from acting their parts, as well as
 ‘ they could) upon a theatre set up for the purpose,
 ‘ begun to prank it (*à la Venetiana*) with such a flou-
 ‘ rish of *mimick*, and *ethopoetick* gestures, that all
 ‘ the courtiers of both sexes, even those that a little
 ‘ before that, were fondest of their own conceits,
 ‘ at the sight of his so inimitable a garb, from ravish-
 ‘ ing actors, that they were before, turned then ra-
 ‘ vished spectators. O! with how great liveliness did
 ‘ he represent the conditions of all manner of men!
 ‘ how naturally did he set before the eyes of the be-
 ‘ holders the rogueries of all professions, from the
 ‘ overweening *monarch* to the peevish *swaine*, through
 ‘ all intermediate degrees of the superficial *courtier*
 ‘ or proud *warrior*, dissembled *churchman*, doting old

‘ three ladies, in a field Or, with the picture of a young lady above
 ‘ the waist, holding in her right hand a brandished sword, and a
 ‘ branch of myrtle in her left for the crest; and for supporters,
 ‘ two javanetes, after the soldier habit of Achaia, with this motto
 ‘ in the scrole of his coat-armour, Ταῦτα ἢ τρία ἀξιοθεάτα :---that
 ‘ is, these three are worthy to behold. Upon his wife Narfesia,
 ‘ who was sovereign of the Amazons, he begot Cratynter.’ Of
 Litoborus, another pretended ancestor of the Urquhart family, who
 lived A. M. 1930, he says, he married two wives, Pasena and
 Emphaneola; and adds, ‘ yet had he, besides these two ladies, seve-
 ‘ ral others, both wives and concubines, as the fashion was over
 ‘ the whole world for the space of above a thousand years there-
 ‘ after.’ And of Phrenedon, another, who lived about sixty years
 after, he roundly asserts, ‘ that he was in the house of the patriarch
 ‘ Abraham, at the time of the destruction of Sodom and Go-
 ‘ morrah.’

‘ man,

‘ *man*, cozening *lawyer*, lying *traveler*, covetous
‘ *merchant*, rude *seaman*, pedantick *scholar*, the amou-
‘ rous *shepherd*, envious *artisan*, vainglorious *master*,
‘ and tricky *servant* ; he did with such variety display
‘ the several humours of all these sorts of people, and
‘ with a so bewitching energy, that he seemed to be
‘ the *original*, they the *counterfeit* ; and they the *re-*
‘ *semblance* whereof he was the *prototype* : he had all
‘ the jeers, squibs, flouts, bulls, quips, taunts, whims,
‘ jests, clinches, gybes, mokes, jerks, with all the
‘ several kinds of equivocations, and other sophistical
‘ captions, that could properly be adapted to the
‘ person by whose representation he intended to in-
‘ veagle the company into a fit of mirth, and would
‘ keep in that miscelany discourse of his (which was all
‘ for the spleen, and nothing for the gall) such a cli-
‘ macterical and mercurially digested method, that
‘ when the fancy of the hearers was tickled with any
‘ conceit, and that the jovial blood was moved, he
‘ held it going, with another new device upon the
‘ back of the first, and another, yet another, and ano-
‘ ther againe, succeeding one another, for the pro-
‘ moval of what is a stirring into a higher agitation ;
‘ till in the closure of the luxuriant period, the *decu-*
‘ *manal* wave of the oddest whimsy of all, enforced
‘ the charmed spirits of the auditory, (for affording
‘ room to its apprehension) suddenly to burst forth
‘ into a laughter ; which commonly lasted just so long
‘ as he had leasure to withdraw behind the skreen,
‘ shift off with the help of a page, the suite he had
‘ on, apparel himself with another, and return to the
‘ stage to act afresh ; for by that time their transported,
‘ disparpled, and sublimated fancies, by the wonder-
‘ fully

‘ fully operating engines of his solacious inventions,
 ‘ had from the hight to which the inward scrues,
 ‘ wheeles, and pullies of his wit had elevated them,
 ‘ descended by degrees into their wonted stations,
 ‘ he was ready for the personating of another carriage;
 ‘ whereof, to the number of fourteen several kinds,
 ‘ (during the five hours space, that at the dukes
 ‘ desire, the sollicitation of the court, and his own
 ‘ recreation, he was pleased to histrionize it) he shewed
 ‘ himself so natural a representative, that any would
 ‘ have thought he had been so many several actors,
 ‘ differing in all things else, save only the stature of
 ‘ the body; With this advantage above the most of
 ‘ other actors, whose tongue, with its *oral* implements,
 ‘ is the onely instrument of their minds disclosing,
 ‘ that, besides his mouth with its appurtenances, he
 ‘ lodged almost a several oratour in every member of
 ‘ his body; his head, his eyes, his shoulders, armes,
 ‘ hands, fingers, thighs, legs, feet, and breast, being
 ‘ able to decipher any passion, whose character he
 ‘ purposed to give.

‘ First, he did present himself with a crown on his
 ‘ head, a scepter in his hand, being clothed in a pur-
 ‘ ple robe furred with ermyne; after that, with a
 ‘ miter on his head, a crosier in his hand, and ac-
 ‘ coutred with a paire of lawn-sleeves: and thereafter,
 ‘ with a helmet on his head, the visiere up, a com-
 ‘ manding-stick in his hand, and arrayed in a buff-
 ‘ suit, with a scarf about his middle. then, in a rich
 ‘ apparel, after the newest fashion, did he shew him-
 ‘ self, (like another *Sejanus*) with a periwig daubed
 ‘ with Cypres powder: in sequel of that, he came
 ‘ out with a three corner’d cap on his head, some
 ‘ parchments

‘ parchments in his hand, and writings hanging at
 ‘ his girdle like chancery bills ; and next to that, with
 ‘ a furred gown about him, an ingot of gold in his
 ‘ hand, and a bag full of money by his side ; after all
 ‘ this, he appeares againe clad in a country-jacket,
 ‘ with a prong in his hand, and a *Monmouth*-like-cap
 ‘ on his head : then very shortly after, with a pal-
 ‘ mer’s coat upon him, a bourdon * in his hand, and
 ‘ some few cockle-shells stuck to his hat, he look’t as
 ‘ if he had come in pilgrimage from *Saint Michael* ;
 ‘ immediatly after that, he domineers it in a bare
 ‘ unlined gowne, with a pair of whips in the one hand,
 ‘ and *Corderius* in the other : and in suite thereof,
 ‘ he *bonderspondered* † it with a pair of pannier-like
 ‘ breeches, a Mountera-cap on his head, and a knife
 ‘ in a wooden sheath, daggerways, by his side ; about
 ‘ the latter end he comes forth again with a square
 ‘ in one hand, a rule in the other, and a leather apron
 ‘ before him : then very quickly after, with a scrip
 ‘ by his side, a sheep hook in his hand, and a basket
 ‘ full of flowers to make nosegays for his mistress :
 ‘ now drawing to a closure, he rants it first in *cuerpo*,
 ‘ and vapouring it with gingling spurrs, and his armes
 ‘ a kenbol like a *Don Diego* he strouts it, and by
 ‘ the loftiness of his gate plaies the *Capitan Spa-*
 ‘ *vento* : then in the very twinkling of an eye, you
 ‘ would have seen him againe issue forth with a
 ‘ cloak upon his arm, in a livery garment, thereby
 ‘ representing the serving-man ; and lastly, at one

* A musical instrument resembling a bassoon, serving also for a walking-staff, in use with the pilgrims who visit the body of St. James at Compostella. Gen. Hist. of the Science and Practice of Music, vol. iv. 139.

† For this strange word no meaning can be found.

‘ time amongst those other, he came out with a long
 ‘ gray beard, and bucked ruff, crouching on a staff
 ‘ tip’t with the head of a Barber’s Cithern *, and his
 ‘ gloves hanging by a button at his girdle.

‘ Those fifteen several personages he did represent
 ‘ with such excellency of garb, and exquisiteness of
 ‘ language, that condignely to perpend the subtlety of
 ‘ the invention, the method of the disposition, the
 ‘ neatness of the elocution, the gracefulness of the
 ‘ action, and wonderful variety in the so dextrous
 ‘ performance of all, you would have taken it for
 ‘ a comedy of five acts, consisting of three scenes,
 ‘ each composed by the best poet in the world, and
 ‘ acted by fifteen of the best players that ever lived,
 ‘ as was most evidently made apparent to all the
 ‘ spectators, in the fifth and last hour of his action,
 ‘ (which, according to our western account, was
 ‘ about six a'clock at night, and, by the calculation
 ‘ of that country, half an hour past three and twenty,
 ‘ at that time of the year) for, purposing to leave of
 ‘ with the setting of the sun, with an endeavour never-
 ‘ theless to make his conclusion the master-piece of
 ‘ the work, he, to that effect, summoning all his spi-
 ‘ rits together, which never failed to be ready at the
 ‘ call of so worthy a commander, did, by their assist-
 ‘ ance, so conglomerate, shuffle, mix, and interlace the
 ‘ gestures, inclinations, actions, and very tones of the
 ‘ speech of those fifteen several sorts of men whose car-
 ‘ riages he did personate, into an inestimable *Ollapo-*

* The instrument now ignorantly called a guitar. It was formerly part of the furniture of a barber’s shop, and was the amusement of waiting customers. See Gen. Hist. of the Science and Practice of Music, Vol. III. page 408.

‘ *drida* of immaterial morsels of divers kinds, futable
‘ to the very Ambrosian relish of the Heliconian
‘ Nymphs, that in the *Peripetia* of this Drammatical
‘ exercitation, by the enchanted transportation of the
‘ eyes and eares of its spectabundal auditorie, one
‘ would have sworne that they all had looked with
‘ multiplying glasse, and that (like that Angel in the
‘ Scripture, whose voice was said to be like the voice
‘ of a multitude) they heard in him alone the promif-
‘ cuous speech of fifteen several actors; by the various
‘ ravishments of the excellencies whereof, in the fro-
‘ lickness of a jocund straine beyond expectation, the
‘ logofascinated spirits of the beholding hearers and
‘ auricularie spectators, were so on a sudden seized
‘ upon in their risible faculties of the soul, and all
‘ their vital motions so universally affected in this
‘ extremitie of agitation, that to avoid the inevitable
‘ charmes of his intoxicating ejaculations, and the
‘ accumulative influences of so powerfull a transpor-
‘ tation, one of my lady Dutchess chief Maids of
‘ Honour, by the vehemencie of the shock of those
‘ incomprehensible raptures, burst forth into a laugh-
‘ ter, to the rupture of a veine in her body; and ano-
‘ ther young lady, by the irresistibile violence of the
‘ pleasure unawares infused, where the tender recep-
‘ tibilitie of her too too tickled fancie was least able
‘ to hold out, so unprovidedly was surprised, that
‘ with no less impetuositie of ridibundal passion
‘ then (as hath been told) occasioned a fracture in
‘ the other young ladie modestie, she, not able
‘ longer to support the well-beloved burthen of so
‘ excessive delight, and intransing joys of such Mer-
‘ curial exhilarations, through the ineffable extasie of
‘ an

‘ an overmastered apprehension, fell back in a swoon,
 ‘ without the appearance of any other life into her,
 ‘ then what by the most refined wits of theological
 ‘ speculators is conceived to be exerted by the purest
 ‘ parts of the separated *entelechies* of blessed saints
 ‘ in their sublimest conversations with the celestial
 ‘ hierarchies: this accident procured the incoming of
 ‘ an apothecarie with restoratives, as the other did
 ‘ that of a surgeon, with consolidative medica-
 ‘ ments.’

Speaking of the manner of Crichton's death, and that it followed from a thrust with his own sword by the hand of the prince, son of the duke of Mantua, the author says;

‘ The whole court wore mourning for him full
 ‘ three quarters of a year together: his funeral was
 ‘ very stately, and on his hearse were stuck more Epi-
 ‘ taphs, Elegies, Threnodies, and Epicediums, then,
 ‘ if digested into one book, would have out-bulk't
 ‘ all *Homers* works; some of them being couched
 ‘ in such exquisite and fine Latin, that you would
 ‘ have thought great *Virgil*, and *Baptista Mantuanus*,
 ‘ for the love of their mother-city, had quit the *Ely-*
 ‘ *sian* fields to grace his obsequies: and other of
 ‘ them (besides what was done in other languages)
 ‘ composed in so neat *Italian*, and so purely fancied,
 ‘ as if *Ariosto*, *Dante*, *Petrark*, and *Bembo* had been
 ‘ purposely resuscitated, to stretch even to the utmost,
 ‘ their poetick vein, to the honour of this brave man;
 ‘ whose picture till this hour is to be seen in the bed-
 ‘ chambers or galleries of the most of the great men of
 ‘ that nation, representing him on horseback, with a
 ‘ lance in one hand, and a book in the other: and

‘ most of the young ladies likewise, that were any
 ‘ thing handsome, in a memorial of his worth, had
 ‘ his effigies in a little oval tablet of gold, hanging
 ‘ ’twixt their breasts; and held (for many yeers toge-
 ‘ ther) that *Metamazion*, or intermammary ornament,
 ‘ an as necessary outward pendicle, for the better
 ‘ setting forth of their accoutrements, as either *Fan*,
 ‘ *Watch*, or *Stomacher*.’

The several exploits of Crichton, above-related, as they appear upon the face of Sir Thomas Urquhart’s book, are, it must be confessed, unsupported by any citations from history, or the writings of contemporary biographers, or other narrators of remarkable transactions, and may, therefore, in the judgment of those who reflect on the hyperbolical style of the author, and the extravagancies to which such an enthusiastic spirit as his will lead men, stand in need of still farther proof. Happily, since the publication of the *Adventurer*, such evidence has been laid before the public, as must remove all doubt of the existence of such a person as Crichton, and of the truth of the facts above-related of him.

For this information we are indebted to Mr. Pen-
 nant, who, in his tour to Scotland, vol. I. page 295, confirms the account of Sir Thomas Urquhart in all its particulars, vouching, as his authority, Aldus Manutius, Joannes Imperialis, a physician of Vicenza, and a writer whom I take to be Estienne Pasquier, two of whom were personally acquainted with him, and eye-witnesses to the triumphs by them severally recorded. From Aldus Manutius we learn, that Crichton was a scholar of Buchanan.

Mr.

Mr. Pennant has further obliged the public with some Latin verses of Crichton's writing, and an engraving of him from an original portrait.

From all which testimonies, it is but a necessary conclusion, that whatever may be suppressed, as passing credibility, of the person here celebrated, enough is, upon incontestable authority, related, to induce us to rank him among prodigies.

That Johnson dictated this number of the *Adventurer*, I have already said: that he did not himself write it may be thus accounted for; he had doubtless read the history of Crichton in Sir Thomas Urquhart's book, and retained it with that firmness of memory, which held fast almost every thing that he met with in books. Supposing him, as we may, too indolent to recur to one that he had formerly read through, and, in the hearing of Hawkesworth, to have related the transactions of so wonderful a man, the latter might catch at it as a fit subject for an essay, and give it to the world, as he has done in the *Adventurer*. To which we may add, that Johnson was seldom a narrator of events: his talent was original thinking; in conversation he told stories, and related historical facts with great precision, but rarely sent them abroad in writing.

We are not to suppose, that that forenefs of mind, which Johnson seems to have felt at the time of his discontinuing the *Rambler*, was, in the short interval of six months, so completely healed, as to render him a disinterested candidate for praise in this new publication; or that he who had declared, that he could not compose a sermon, gratis, would write an *Adventurer*, without being hired to it: on the contrary, it

is certain, that he retained his old maxim, that gain was the only genuine stimulative to literary exertion, and that the assistance he gave to this publication was purchased at two guineas, for every number that he had finished; a rate of payment which he had before adjusted in his stipulation for the Rambler, and was probably the measure of a reward to his fellow-labourers.

The avowed end of the Adventurer, being the same with that of the Rambler, and the plan and conduct thereof so little different from it, the latter may be considered as a continuation of the former: nevertheless, it may be observed, that in the Adventurer, the number of entertaining papers, of portraits, singular characters, and essays of wit, humour, and pleasantry, is greater, in proportion, than in the Rambler; and to that diversity it was doubtless owing, that the circulation of it was more diffuse. On the part of the writers it was carried on with great vigour, and, together with the Rambler, is likely to remain a lasting evidence of the spirit that dictated, and the public good sense that encouraged, such a series, as they both contain, of religious instruction, oeconomic wisdom, and innocent delight.

Hawkesworth has, almost in terms, declared himself the editor of the Adventurer, and that the other contributors thereto were merely auxiliaries; and his zeal for its success may be inferred from the number of papers written by himself, which, upon a comparison, will be found nearly equal to that of all the rest. This zeal was excited by a motive far more strong than any which actuated his co-adjutors, a desire of advantage in his then profession, which ostensibly was

that

that of a governor of a school for the education of young females, by making himself known as a judge of life and manners, and capable of qualifying those of riper years for the important relations of domestic society.

But while he was indulging a well-grounded hope to reap this fruit of his studies, a reward of a very different kind courted his acceptance. The archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Herring, his diocesan and neighbour, having perused his essays, and informed himself of his general character, made him an offer of a faculty that should raise him above the level of vulgar literati, and, almost without his being conscious of any such exaltation, create him a doctor of both laws, and the honour was accepted.

Among men of real learning, there is but one opinion concerning what are called Lambeth degrees. The right of conferring them is a relic of the power anciently exercised in this country by the legates of the pope, and is, by statute, transferred to the archbishop of Canterbury. It received a legal sanction in the determination, about the year 1720, of the case of the warden of Manchester college. Degrees of this kind are often convenient for clergymen, as they are qualifications for a plurality of livings, but, as they imply nothing more than favour, convey little or no honour.

But Hawkesworth was so far mistaken in his notion of this act of kindness of the archbishop, that though he had never read Justinian, nor perhaps ever seen the *Corpus Juris Civilis*, or *Corpus Juris Canonici*, he conceived himself transmuted by it into a civilian and a canonist, and qualified for an advocate in either of those judicatures where the above laws are severally recognised.

In consequence of this persuasion, he made an effort to be admitted a pleader in the courts of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but met with such an opposition as obliged him to desist. Upon this, he bent his course another way, and, recurring to his first design of converting his school into a kind of female academy, succeeded, not more to his own emolument, than the improvement of those who participated in the benefits of his tuition.

In this train of events, and others that are well enough known, it may be discerned, that Hawkesworth was a greater gainer by the Adventurer than any of those concerned in it. His success, however, wrought no good effects upon his mind and conduct; it elated him too much, and betrayed him into a forgetfulness of his origin, and a neglect of his early acquaintance; and on this I have heard Johnson remark, in terms that sufficiently expressed a knowledge of his character, and a resentment of his behaviour. It is probable that he might use the same language to Hawkesworth himself, and also reproach him with the acceptance of an academical honour to which he could have no pretensions, and, which Johnson, conceiving to be irregular, as many yet do, held in great contempt; thus much is certain, that soon after the attainment of it, the intimacy between them ceased.

The expedients above-mentioned, and the visits of a variety of friends, which his writings had procured him, afforded Johnson great relief, and enabled him to keep at a bay those terrors, which were almost incessantly affailing him, till the beginning of the year 1752, O. S. when it pleased God to try him by a calamity, which was very near realizing all those evils
which,

which, for a series of years, he had dreaded: this was the loss of his wife, who, on the 28th day of March, and after seventeen years cohabitation, left him a childless widower, abandoned to sorrow, and incapable of consolation.

Those who were best acquainted with them both, wondered that Johnson could derive no comfort from the usual resources, reflections on the conditions of mortality, the instability of human happiness, resignation to the divine will, and other topics; and the more, when they considered, that their marriage was not one of those which inconsiderate young people call love-matches, and that she was more than old enough to be his mother; that, as their union had not been productive of children, the medium of a new relation between them was wanting; that her inattention to some, at least, of the duties of a wife, were evident in the person of her husband, whose negligence of dress seemed never to have received the least correction from her, and who, in the fordidness of his apparel, and the complexion of his linen, even shamed her. For these reasons I have often been inclined to think, that if this fondness of Johnson for his wife was not dissembled, it was a lesson that he had learned by rote, and that, when he practised it, he knew not where to stop till he became ridiculous. It is true, he has celebrated her person in the word *formosæ*, which he caused to be inscribed on her grave-stone; but could he, with that imperfection in his sight which made him say, in the words of Milton, he never saw the human face divine, have been a witness of her beauty? which we may suppose
had

had sustained some loss before he married; her daughter by her former husband being but little younger than Johnson himself. As, during her lifetime, he invited but few of his friends to his house, I never saw her, but I have been told by Mr. Garrick, Dr. Hawkesworth, and others, that there was somewhat crazy in the behaviour of them both; profound respect on his part, and the airs of an antiquated beauty on her's. Johnson had not then been used to the company of women, and nothing but his conversation rendered him tolerable among them: it was, therefore, necessary that he should practice his best manners to one whom, as she was descended from an ancient family, and had brought him a fortune, he thought his superior. This, after all, must be said, that he laboured to raise his opinion of her to the highest, by inserting in many of her books of devotion that I have seen, such endearing memorials as these: 'This was dear Tetty's book.'——'This was a prayer which dear Tetty was accustomed to say,' not to mention his frequent recollection of her in his meditations, and the singularity of his prayers respecting her.

To so high a pitch had he worked his remembrance of her, that he requested a divine, of his acquaintance, to preach a sermon at her interment, which, probably, he would have written himself, but was dissuaded from so ostentatious a display of the virtues of a woman, who, though she was his wife, was but little known. He intended also to have deposited her remains in the chapel in Tothill fields, Westminster, but, altering his mind, he committed the disposal of them to his friend
Hawkesworth,

Hawkefworth, who buried her in his own parish-church of Bromley in Kent, under a black marble stone, on which Johnson himself, a few months before his death, caused the following memorial to be inscribed:

Hic conduntur reliquiae

ELIZABETHÆ

Antiqua Jarvisiorum gente,

Peatlingæ, apud Leicestrienses, ortæ;

Formosæ, cultæ, ingeniosæ, piæ;

Uxoris, primis nuptiis, HENRICI PORTER,

Secundis, SAMUELIS JOHNSON;

Qui multum amatam, diuque defletam

Hoc lapide contexit.

Obiit Londini, mense Mart.

A. D. MDCCLIII.

I have been informed that, in his early youth, he entertained a romantic passion, excited possibly by reading the poets, for a young woman of a family and in circumstances far above him; but proofs are wanting that Johnson was, at any period of his life, susceptible of amorous emotions. In his intercourse with the world, he had become known to many of the female sex, who sought his conversation*, but it was never heard that he entertained a passion for any one, or was in any other sense a lover, than as he was the author of amo-

* Posterity will wonder to be told, that a celebrated courtesan, Kitty Fisher, was of the number, and that, possibly having heard of the attempt of Laïs on Demosthenes, she once left her card at his house.

rous verses. If ever he was in danger of becoming one in reality, it was of a young woman whom he used to call Molly Aston, of whose wit, and of the delight he enjoyed in conversing with her, he would speak with rapture*, but this was in the life-time of Mrs. Johnson, and he was a man too strict in his morals to give any reasonable cause of jealousy to a wife.

The melancholy, which seized Johnson on the death of his wife, was not, in degree, such as usually follows the deprivation of near relations and friends: it was of the blackest and deepest kind. That affection, which could excite in the mind of Milton the pleasing images described in his sonnet on his deceased wife,

‘Methought I saw my late espoused saint,’

wrought no such effect on that of Johnson: the apparition of his departed wife was altogether of the terrific kind, and hardly afforded him a hope that she was in a state of happiness.

• She was a violent whig, and, by consequence, a declaimer for liberty, a particular in her character that induced Johnson to compliment her in the following elegant epigram:

Liber ut esse velim, suafisti pulchra Maria,
Ut maneam liber—pulchra Maria, vale!

thus translated by Richard Paul Jodrell, Esq;

When fair Maria's soft persuasive strain
Bids universal liberty to reign,
Oh! how at variance are her lips and eyes!
For, while the charmer talks, the gazer dies.

That

That these gloomy conceptions were in part owing to the books he had been accustomed to read, I have little doubt. Sundry passages occur in his writings, which induce a suspicion, that his notions of the state of departed spirits were such as are now deemed superstitious; and I will not attempt to vindicate him from the charge of believing some of the many relations extant, that go to prove an intercourse between them and the inhabitants of this earth. These, as they were systematical, and such as he was able to defend by arguments the most specious, I can no better account for, than by a supposition, that in the course of his studies he had been a dabbler in demonology, by which I mean, not the writings of those vulgar authors who relate the intrigues and midnight banquets of witches with infernal spirits, or that teach the difference between black and white witches, and assert the power of them and their agents to harm us, but from those more authentic writers, namely, Mede, and others, whose proofs, that the doctrine of demons made a part of the gentile theology, have induced an opinion that in these later times departed spirits have such an existence as the intercourse above-mentioned, seems to imply.

Not to dwell longer on so painful a subject, I will dismiss these reflections with an observation, that by the unhappiness of his bodily constitution, and the defect of his organs of sense, he was rendered unsusceptible of almost all those delights which we term pleasures of the imagination, and which help to soothe the mind under affliction; and this melancholy truth I shall attempt to illustrate by the following observations:

With respect to sight, it must be noted, that he was of that class of men, who, from a defect in the visual organs, are termed myops, or near-sighted persons; and farther, that disease had deprived him of the use of one eye, the consequence whereof was, that in lieu of those various delightful prospects which the face of nature affords, the beautiful and the grand, that multiply ideas and administer delight, as well in the reflection as the immediate enjoyment of them, his mind was presented with an universal blank. Nor was his misfortune less, with respect to those objects wherein beauty, symmetry, and harmony of parts and proportions are resident: to him a statue was an unshapen mass, and a sumptuous edifice a quarry of stone. Of the beauties of painting, notwithstanding the many eulogiums on that art which, after the commencement of his friendship with Sir Joshua Reynolds, he inserted in his writings, he had not the least conception; and this leads me to mention a fact to the purpose, which I well remember. One evening, at the club, I came in with a small roll of prints, which, in the afternoon, I had picked up: I think they were landscapes of Perelle, and laying it down with my hat, Johnson's curiosity prompted him to take it up and unroll it: he viewed the prints severally with great attention, and asked me what sort of pleasure such things could afford me; I told him, that as representations of nature, containing an assemblage of such particulars as render rural scenes delightful, they presented to my mind the objects themselves, and that my imagination realised the prospect before me; he said, that was more than his would do, for that

in his whole life he was never capable of discerning the least resemblance of any kind between a picture and the subject it was intended to represent.

To the delights of music, he was equally insensible : neither voice nor instrument, nor the harmony of concordant sounds, had power over his affections, or even to engage his attention. Of music in general, he has been heard to say, ‘ it excites in my mind no ideas, ‘ and hinders me from contemplating my own ;’ and of a fine singer, or instrumental performer, that ‘ he had ‘ the merit of a Canary-bird*.’ Not that his hearing was so defective as to account for this insensibility, but he laboured under the misfortune which he has noted in his life of Barretier, and is common to more persons than in this musical age are willing to confess it, of wanting that additional sense or faculty, which renders music grateful to the human ear.

From this state of his mental and bodily constitution, it must necessarily be inferred, that his comforts were very few, and that his mind had no counterpoise against those evils of sickness, sorrow, and want, which, at different periods of his life he laboured under, and in some of his writings pathetically laments. Of this misfortune himself was sensible,

* I have sometimes thought that music was positive pain to him. Upon his once hearing a celebrated performer go through a hard composition, and hearing it remarked that it was very difficult, Johnson said, ‘ I would it had been impossible.’ As a science of which he was ignorant he contemned it. In the early part of my life I had collected some memoirs of Abbate Steffani, Mr. Handel’s predecessor at the court of Hanover, and the composer of those fine duets that go under his name, with a view to print them, as presents to some musical friends : I submitted the manuscript to Johnson’s perusal, and he returned it with corrections that turned to ridicule all I had said of him and his works.

and

and the frequent reflection thereon wrought in him a persuasion, that the evils of human life preponderated against the enjoyments of it; and this opinion he would frequently enforce by an observation on the general use of narcotics in all parts of the world, as, in the east, and southern countries, opium; in the west, and northern, spirituous liquors and tobacco*; and into this principle he resolved most of the temptations to ebriety. To the use of the former of these, himself had a strong propensity, which increased as he advanced in years: his first inducement to it was, relief against watchfulness, but when it became habitual, it was the means of positive pleasure, and as such, was resorted to by him whenever any depression of spirits made it necessary. His practice was, to take it in substance, that is to say, half a grain levigated with a spoon against the side of a cup half full of some liquid, which, as a vehicle, carried it down.

With so few resources of delight, it is not to be wondered at, if after the loss of his wife, his melancholy was hardly supportable. Company and conversation were the only reliefs to it, and when these failed him he was miserable. At the club in Ivy lane, our usual hour of departure was eleven, and when that approached he was frequently tempted to wander the streets, and join in the conversation of those miserable females who were there to be met with. Of these he was very inquisitive as to their course of life, the history of their seduction, and the chances of reclaiming them. The first question he generally

* He has been heard to remark, that since the disuse of smoking among the better sort of people, suicide has been more frequent in this country than before.

asked was, if they could read. Of one who was very handsome, he asked, for what she thought God had given her so much beauty: she answered—‘To please gentlemen *.’

In the midst of the distresses which, at this period of his life, surrounded him, he found both inclination and the means to be helpful to others. His wife, a short time before her death, had consigned to his care a friend of her own sex, a person of very extraordinary endowments, whom, for a benevolent purpose that will be shortly mentioned, Johnson had invited to a residence in his house: This was Mrs. Anna Williams, whose history is as follows:

Her father, Zachariah Williams, was a surgeon and physician in South Wales, a man of parts and great ingenuity: he had addicted himself to mathematical studies, and having, by a kind of intuitive penetration, discovered, that the variations of the magnetic needle were equal at equal distances east and west; he entertained a sanguine hope, that he had attained the means of ascertaining the longitude. As London was the place where he thought he should best avail himself of his discovery, and also turn it to the improvement of his fortunes, he, in the year 1730, with an apparatus of mathematical and nautical instruments of his own invention, left his habitation and business, and, together with his daughter, settled in the metropolis. His first business was, to lay before the commissioners of the longitude the fruits of his

* This story is too well attested for me to omit it; but it leaves it a question, how, with the defect of sight under which he laboured, he was capable of discerning beauty. He might possibly think it an indispensable requisite for her profession, and therefore conclude that she had it.

studies ; but, upon a due examination, they all proved abortive : no proportion whatever of the reward could be assigned him as his due ; but, as a kind of recompence for his disappointment, means were found to procure him a maintenance in the Charterhouse, and accordingly he was admitted into that asylum of age and poverty. With all his ingenuity and scientific wisdom, which I have heard his daughter, with an excusable partiality, magnify beyond credibility, he must have been defective in worldly prudence ; for, either by the infraction of œconomical regulations, or some other misconduct respecting the endowment from which he derived his support, he rendered himself at first obnoxious to censure from the governors, and in the end was obliged to forego all the benefits of it, to become an outcast, and, at the age of seventy-five, to suffer shipwreck in the wide ocean of the world. In a narrative, published in 1749, he complains of his expulsion as an act of injustice.

What became of him afterwards I could never learn, save that in the year 1755, he published in Italian and English a book intitled, ‘ An account of an attempt to ascertain the longitude at sea, by an exact theory of the magnetical needle,’ written, as it is supposed, by Johnson, and translated by Mr. Baretti. Of his daughter, I am able to say more, having known her a long time. About ten years after her arrival with her father in London, she was alarmed by the appearance of a cataract on both her eyes, which continued to increase till it totally deprived her of her sight. Before this calamity befel her, she, with the assistance of her father, had acquired a knowledge of the French and Italian languages

languages, and had made great improvements in literature, which, together with the exercise of her needle, at which she was very dextrous, as well after the loss of her sight as before, contributed to support her under her affliction, till a time when it was thought by her friends, that relief might be obtained from the hand of an operating surgeon. At the request of Dr. Johnson, I went with her to a friend of mine, Mr. Samuel Sharp, senior surgeon of Guy's hospital, who before had given me to understand, that he would couch her gratis if the cataract was ripe, but upon making the experiment it was found otherwise, and that the crystalline humour was not sufficiently inspissated for the needle to take effect. She had been almost a constant companion of Mrs. Johnson for some time before her decease, but had never resided in the house: afterwards, for the convenience of performing the intended operation, Johnson took her home, and upon the failure of that, kept her as the partner of his dwelling till he removed into chambers, first in Gray's inn, and next in the Temple. Afterward, in 1766, upon his taking a house in Johnson's court in Fleet street, he invited her thither, and in that, and his last house in Bolt court, she successively dwelt for the remainder of her life.

The loss of her sight made but a small abatement of her chearfulness, and was scarce any interruption of her studies. With the assistance of two female friends, she translated from the French of Pere La Bletrie, the life of the emperor Julian*. In 1755, Mr. Garrick, ever disposed to help the afflicted, in-

* See it mentioned in Nichols's Life of Bowyer.

dulged her with a benefit-play that produced her two hundred pounds; and in 1766, she published by subscription a quarto volume of miscellanies in prose and verse, and thereby increased her little fund to three hundred pounds, which, being prudently invested, yielded an income, that under such protection as she experienced from Dr. Johnson, was sufficient for her support.

She was a woman of an enlightened understanding; plain, as the women call it, in her person, and easily provoked to anger, but possessing, nevertheless, some excellent moral qualities, among which no one was more conspicuous, than her desire to promote the welfare and happiness of others, and of this she gave a signal proof, by her solicitude in favour of an institution for the maintenance and education of poor deserted females in the parish of St. Sepulchre, London, supported by the voluntary contributions of ladies, and, as the foundation-stone of a fund for its future subsistence, she bequeathed to it the whole of that little, which, by the means above-mentioned, she had been able to accumulate. To the endowments and qualities here ascribed to her, may be added, a larger share of experimental prudence than is the lot of most of her sex. Johnson, in many exigences, found her an able counsellor, and seldom shewed his wisdom more than when he hearkened to her advice. In return, she received from his conversation the advantages of religious and moral improvement, which she cultivated so, as in a great measure to smoothe the constitutional asperity of her temper. When these particulars are known, this intimacy, which began with compassion, and terminated in a
friendship

friendship that subsisted till death dissolved it, will be easily accounted for.

Johnson had but for a short time enjoyed the relief from solitude and melancholy reflection which this friendly attachment afforded him, before he experienced that affliction, which, in the course of nature, is the concomitant of longevity, in the loss of his friend Cave, who finished a useful and well-spent life in the month of January, 1754. It might seem that between men so different in their endowments and tempers as Johnson and Cave were, little of true friendship could subsist, but the contrary was the case: Cave, though a man of a saturnine disposition, had a sagacity which had long been exercised in the discrimination of men, in searching into the recesses of their minds, and finding out what they were fit for; and a liberality of sentiment and action, which, under proper restrictions, inclined him not only to encourage genius and merit, but to esteem and even to venerate the possessors of those qualities as often as he met with them: it cannot, therefore, be supposed, but that he entertained a high regard for such a man as Johnson, and, having had a long experience of his abilities and integrity, that he had improved this disposition into friendship. Johnson, on his part, sought for other qualities in those with whom he meant to form connections: had he determined to make only those his friends whose endowments were equal to his own, his life would have been that of a Carthusian; he was therefore more solicitous to contract friendships with men of probity and integrity, and endued with good moral qualities, than with those whose intellectual powers, or literary attainments, were the

most conspicuous part of their character; and of the former, Cave had a share, sufficient to justify his choice.

On this mutual regard for each other, as on a solid basis, rested the friendship between Johnson and Cave. It was therefore with a degree of sorrow, proportioned to his feelings towards his friends, which were ever tender, that Johnson reflected on the loss he had to sustain, and became the narrator of the most important incidents of his life. In the account which he has given of his death, it will be readily believed, that what he has related respecting the constancy of his friendship, is true, and that when, as the last act of reason, he fondly pressed the hand that was afterwards employed in recording his memory, his affection was sincere.

By some papers now in my hands it seems that; notwithstanding Johnson was paid for writing the Rambler, he had a remaining interest in the copy-right of that paper, which about this time he sold. The produce thereof, the pay he was receiving for his papers in the Adventurer, and the fruits of his other literary labours, had now exalted him to such a state of comparative affluence, as, in his judgment, made a man-servant necessary. Soon after the decease of Mrs. Johnson, the father of Dr. Bathurst arrived in England from Jamaica, and brought with him a negro-servant, a native of that island, whom he caused to be baptized and named Francis Barber, and sent for instruction to Burton upon Tees in Yorkshire: upon the decease of captain Bathurst, for so he was called, Francis went to live with his son, who willingly parted with him to Johnson. The uses for which he was intended to

to serve this his last master were not very apparent, for Diogenes himself never wanted a servant less than he seemed to do : the great bushy wig, which throughout his life he affected to wear, by that closeness of texture which it had contracted and been suffered to retain, was ever nearly as impenetrable by a comb as a quickset hedge ; and little of the dust that had once settled on his outer garments was ever known to have been disturbed by the brush. In short, his garb and the whole of his external appearance was, not to say negligent, but slovenly, and even squalid ; to all which, and the necessary consequences of it, he appeared as insensible as if he had been nurtured at the Cape of Good Hope : he saw that, notwithstanding these offensive peculiarities in his manners, his conversation had great attractions, and perhaps he might estimate the strength of the one by the degree of the other, and thence derive that apathy, which, after all, might have its foundation in pride, and afforded him occasion for a triumph over all the solitudes respecting dress *.

* That he was an habitual sloven his best friends cannot deny. When I first knew him, he was little less so than Magliabechi, of whom it is said, that at meals he made a book serve him for a plate, and that he very seldom changed his linen, or washed himself. It is said of other scholars and men eminent in literature, of Leibnitz, Poiret, St. Evremond, and Pope, that they were alike uncleanly. Johnson, as his acquaintance with persons of condition became more enlarged, and his invitations to dinner-parties increased, corrected, in some degree, this failing, but could never be said to be neatly dressed, or indeed clean ; he affected to wear cloaths of the darkest and dirtiest colours, and, in all weathers, black stockings. His wig never sat even on his head, as may be observed in all the pictures of him, the reason whereof was, that

Of this negro-servant much has been said, by those who knew little or nothing of him, in justification of that partiality which Johnson shewed for him, and his neglect of his own necessitous relations. The following particulars are all that are worth relating of him: He stayed with Johnson about five years, that is to say, till 1758, and then left him, but at the end of two years returned, and was taken again into his service. His first master had, in great humanity, made him a Christian; and his last, for no assignable reason, nay, rather in despite of nature, and to unfit him for being useful according to his capacity, determined to make him a scholar.

He placed him at a school at Bishop-Stortford, and kept him there five years; and, as Mrs. Williams was used to say, who would frequently reproach him with his indiscretion in this instance, expended three hundred pounds in an endeavour to have him taught Latin and Greek*.

The proposal for the dictionary, and other of his writings, had exhibited Johnson to view in the character of a poet and a philologist: to his moral qualities, and his concern for the interests of religion and virtue, the world were for some time strangers; but no sooner were these manifested by the publication of the Rambler and the Adventurer, than he was looked up to as a master of human life, a practical Christian,

he had a twist in his shoulders, and that the motion of his head, as soon as he put it on, dragged it awry.

* Mrs. Williams, who, with a view to the interest of her friend, was very attentive to the conduct of this his favourite, when she took occasion to complain to his master of his misbehaviour, would do it in such terms as these: ‘This is your scholar! your philosopher! upon whom you have spent so many hundred pounds.’

and

and a divine; his acquaintance was sought by persons of the first eminence in literature, and his house, in respect of the conversations there, became an academy. One person, in particular, who seems, for a great part of his life, to have affected the character of a patron of learned and ingenious men, in a letter which I have seen, made him a tender of his friendship in terms to this effect:—‘That having perused many of
 ‘ his writings, and thence conceived a high opinion of
 ‘ his learning, his genius, and moral qualities, if Mr.
 ‘ Johnson was inclined to enlarge the circle of his ac-
 ‘ quaintance, he [the letter-writer] should be glad to
 ‘ be admitted into the number of his friends, and to
 ‘ receive a visit from him.’——This person was Mr. Dodington, afterwards lord Melcombe, the value and honour of whose patronage, to speak the truth, may in some degree be estimated by his diary lately published, but better by the account which I mean here to give of his favourites and dependents, with some of whom I was personally acquainted. How Johnson received this invitation I know not: as it was conveyed in very handsome expressions, it required some apology for declining it, and I cannot but think he framed one.

One of the earliest of lord Melcombe’s clients was Dr. Edward Young, the author of the Satires, of the Night-thoughts, and of the Revenge, a tragedy; a man who, by a strange fatality, could never attain to any of those distinctions in his profession, which are generally understood to be the rewards of learning and piety, and must be supposed to have failed by the ardour with which he solicited, and the servile adulation which he practised to come at them, of which latter disposition he

he has given such instances in the dedications of his satires to the several persons of high rank, to whom they are addressed, as also, in the exordium to each of the Night-thoughts at their first coming abroad, for in the later edition they are omitted, as are a disgrace to manhood, and must have put the vainest of his patrons to the blush.

Mr. James Ralph was another of his dependents, of whom, as a pretender to genius, much may be learned from the Dunciad. He was the tool of that party, of which his lordship laboured in vain to become the leader; and, to serve its purposes, by inflaming the minds of the people, wrote a weekly paper called the Remembrancer*. For this and other good deeds of the like kind, he is, in the diary above-mentioned, held forth as an exemplar to all writers of his profession, and dignified with the character of an honest man.

Another of these men of genius, who enjoyed the favour of Mr. Dodington, was Mr. Paul Whitehead, whose love for his country, and knowledge of its interests, became first known by a satire of his writing entitled, 'The State Dunces,' which, as he was a patriot, and, as all patriots pretend to be, a firm friend to what they call the constitution, bears this candid motto :

* Whoever is desirous of being acquainted with the intrigues of contending factions, and the methods of exciting popular discontent, may receive ample information from the perusal of lord Melcombe's Diary, and will there find, that to effect this purpose, and furnish the unthinking multitude with topics for clamour, the publication of a political news-paper was by him and his party thought expedient. I have been credibly informed, that dean Swift would frequently boast, that with liberty allowed him for the free exercise of his pen on the measures of government, he was able to write down any ministry whatever.

‘ I from my soul sincerely hate

‘ Both kings and ministers of state.’

He also wrote ‘ Manners,’ a satire; a libel of a more general tendency, as including in it many invectives against some of the nobility, and most eminent of the dignified clergy.

Of this man, who many years was my neighbour in the country, I know much to blame and somewhat to commend: he may be supposed, in his younger days, to have imbibed that malevolence against the Hanover succession, which was the sentiment of many at the beginning of this century, and by an easy transition, to which the perusal of such papers as the Craftsman, Common-sense, and other publications of the time, and, most of all, the conversation of such persons as he chose for his associates, might probably lead him, to have engendered in his mind a hatred of all whose offices in the state had made the support of government their duty, and a resolution to acquiesce in that fallacious discrimination of two classes of men, the one whereof was in, and the other out of power, into the court and country parties.

It is not much to the credit of the latter of these two, that some of the writers on the side of it were such avowed enemies to religion, as might beget, in those acquainted with their characters, a suspicion that, as in the language of politics, there is an alliance between church and state, a similar relation subsists between infidelity and patriotism, proofs whereof have not been wanting in these our late times; for it is evident, that as the injunctions to obedience imply religion, the want thereof, *quoad* the person who is to pay it, vacates the obligation, and leaves him at liberty to form an alliance with the other side.

And that some of the writers on the side of the country party, as it was called, particularly in the *Craftsman*, were men of this character, is certain. Amhurst, the ostensible author of the paper, was expelled his university, and was, moreover, a friend and associate of Strutt, an attorney of the temple, who wrote several letters or essays in his paper, and a treatise with some such title as, ‘A philosophical enquiry into the nature of human liberty,’ wherein the freedom of the human will is denied, and the actions of men are made to result from an irresistible necessity. This tract I have heard Whitehead commend and assert that it contained a full refutation of all that Dr. Clarke, in his controversy with Leibnitz, has advanced in favour of the contrary opinion, and at the same time speak of the author as one whom the greatness of his parts, had he lived, would have raised to the dignity of lord-chancellor; but of whose moral and religious principles a judgment may be formed, by means of the following letter, which, for the atheistical expressions contained therein, was the ground for the expulsion of the writer of it from the university of Cambridge. I forbear remarking on this blasphemous epistle, farther than, that the regret I have often felt in the perusal of it has been not a little increased by the figure that my friend Paul makes in it, and the intimacy between him and Strutt which it discloses.

‘ To Mr. STEPHEN G——BBS.

‘ Dear Stephen,

Oct. 3, 1734.

‘ I received yours, with the guinea and the partridges,
 ‘ for which I return you many thanks, and need not
 ‘ say how much I should rejoice in your company at
 ‘ the

‘ the eating of them. But we not only suffer the loss
 ‘ of that, but of P——— B———’s too, who went to
 ‘ London incog. last Monday, and it is uncertain
 ‘ when he’ll have power to break from the arms of
 ‘ his charmer, but V——— will supply his place at
 ‘ the Tuns to-day, who is as great a hero in the cause
 ‘ of truth.

‘ I am very glad to hear W——— B——— ap-
 ‘ pears so well in the world again, and when you see
 ‘ him, beg you would remember my kind respects to
 ‘ him, wishing him all joy. And as to any farther
 ‘ progress in atheism, I was arriv’d at the top, the ne-
 ‘ plus ultra, before I enjoyed the beatifick vision (the
 ‘ night I was born in the spirit from you) being fixed
 ‘ and immoveable in the knowledge of the truth, to
 ‘ which I attained by means of that infallible guide
 ‘ the Philosophical Enquiry; and I am glad to hear,
 ‘ what I did not at all doubt of, that it would equally
 ‘ enlighten your understanding; and am persuaded
 ‘ that you see the necessary connection between every
 ‘ proposition, and consequently, that the points now
 ‘ in debate are strictly demonstrated. If any material
 ‘ objection should arise (which is barely a possible
 ‘ supposition) I beg you will consult me, or some
 ‘ other able minister of the word of truth, to the
 ‘ quieting of your conscience, and avoiding all scruple
 ‘ and doubt.

‘ I was inexpressibly happy with the most adorable
 ‘ and omniscient Father Strutt, his brother White-
 ‘ head, W———, &c. completely fulfilling the scene
 ‘ proposed in his letter.

‘ On Saturday we came to Cambridge, where we
 ‘ had the full enjoyment of their’s till Tuesday, when
 ‘ they

‘ they return’d to Bury; and last Saturday I went
 ‘ thither again by appointment, but they were obliged
 ‘ to set out that day for London, and I went with them
 ‘ to Sudbury, where we lay. You’ll imagine I was
 ‘ transported with their company, and would not have
 ‘ left them before they got to London, but that I was
 ‘ obliged to return to college to pray.

‘ I’ve sent you one song as a taste of our mirth*. I
 ‘ receiv’d a letter from the president yesterday, which
 ‘ obliges me to return to Horksley next Tuesday.—
 ‘ I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing you in
 ‘ college about the 5th of November. In the mean
 ‘ time I shall be glad of a line or two from you,
 ‘ and am

‘ Your sincere friend

‘ and humble servant,

‘ T. D—CK—T.’

‘ P. S. Strutt was the author of the three letters
 ‘ in the last Craftsmen, except last Saturday’s, and
 ‘ will write in defence of them in answer to the mi-
 ‘ nisterial writers. I intend myself the pleasure of
 ‘ drinking tea with Polly this afternoon. My service
 ‘ to Mr. G——, Miss Nanny, and all friends.’

The political principles of Whitehead recom-
 mended him to Mr. Dodington, whose ostentation
 was gratified, and his ambitious views in a way to
 be advanced, by a connection with a man who
 had abilities to write, and the boldness to publish
 whatever might serve the purposes of a party, and
 whose zeal for its interests was subject to any direction.

* Supposed to be, ‘ Religion’s a politic law.’

Dodington admired the keenness of Whitehead's wit, and the spirit of his satires, and his commendations were repaid by the latter, with encomiums on his patron's political wisdom and qualifications for state employments, which, as they seemed to have no foundation in principle, Paul was as little able to investigate as to delineate the path of a comet. In his conversation there was little to praise: it was desultory, vociferous, and profane. He had contracted a habit of swearing in his younger years, which he retained to his latest. At Twickenham he never frequented divine service; and when pressed by one of his friends there to shew himself at church, excused himself by saying he was not settled. He was visited by very few of the inhabitants of the village; but his house was open to all his London friends, among whom were Mr. Hogarth, Isaac Ware the architect, George Lambert, and Hayman the painters, and Mr. Havard the player, men who had spent all their lives in and about Covent-garden, and looked upon it as the school of manners, and an epitome of the world.

Paul was endowed with a great portion of wit, but it was altogether of the satyrical kind, and served to little purpose, other than to expose to ridicule or contempt the objects to which it was directed. In concert with one Carey a surgeon, he planned and exhibited a procession along the Strand, of persons on foot and on horseback, dressed for the occasion, carrying mock ensigns, and the symbols of free-masonry*; the design of which was, to expose to laughter the insignia and ceremonies of that mysterious institution,

* A print of the procession, designed and engraved by Benoist, was published about the time.

and it was not till thirty years after, that the fraternity recovered the disgrace which so ludicrous a representation had brought on it.

After enumerating these his exceptionable qualities, it is but justice to say of Whitehead, that he was by nature a friendly and kind-hearted man, well acquainted with vulgar manners and the town, but little skilled in the knowledge of the world, and, by consequence, little able to resist the arts of designing men; and of this defect he gave a melancholy proof in submitting to be engaged for Fleetwood, the patentee of Drury-lane theatre, in a bond for 3000l; for failure in the payment whereof he sustained imprisonment in the Fleet for some of the best years of his life. He had married a woman of a good family and fortune, whom, though homely in her person, and little better than an idiot, he treated not only with humanity, but with tenderness, hiding, as well as he was able, those defects in her understanding, which are oftener the subjects of ridicule than of compassion. After his enlargement, some money fell to him, with which, and the profits of the place of deputy-treasurer of the chamber, which he held for some time under lord Le Despenser, he purchased a cottage on Twickenham common, and from a design and under the inspection of his friend Isaac Ware, at a small expence improved it into an elegant dwelling. Here he manifested the goodness of his nature in the exercise of kind offices, in healing breaches, and composing differences between his poor neighbours; and living to see, as he did at the commencement of his present majesty's reign, power lodged in the hands of such as he thought friends of their country, and above all temptations to abuse it,
he

he abandoned his factious principles, and became a loyal subject. In a grateful sense of his obligations to lord Le Despenser, he directed, that after his decease, his heart, inclosed in a vessel for the purpose, should be presented to him, which being done, his lordship caused it to be deposited in his church of West Wycomb.

Dr. Thompson was one of the many physicians who, in this country, have enjoyed a short-lived reputation, acquired by methods unknown to any but themselves. The earliest of his practice was among men of eminence, Mr. Pope and others, who, deceived by his confidence and a certain contempt with which he ever spoke of the rest of his profession as being bigotted to theories and systems, looked upon him as a man of an inventive genius, who had reduced the art of healing to an epitome. The fact was, that, affecting to be a free-thinker in his faculty, he set at nought the discoveries and improvements of others, and treated with ridicule that practice which he did not understand. He was an everlasting prater on politics and criticism, and saw so deep into the councils of the king of Prussia, that he could assign the motives of all his actions, during the last war in which he was engaged. At taverns, in coffee-houses, at the cyder-cellar in Maiden lane, he was frequently to be found holding forth on these subjects without interruption, in a tone of voice which Mr. Garrick would say was like the buz of an humble-bee in a hall-window. This man enjoyed the favour of lord Melcombe, and, what was of greater benefit to him, an apartment in his house, with a protection from arrests, founded on the privilege which the law grants,

not only to peers, but to the lowest of their menial servants.

Quin once told me a story of this man, which I will relate in as few words as I am able.—Quin walking up and down, one Sunday evening, in the Bedford coffee-house, observed a man in a dark corner leaning his forehead on the table, and every now and then sending forth a sigh, that seemed to come from his heart. Moved with compassion, he went up to him, and enquiring the cause of his grief, was told by him, that his name was Thompson, that he was a physician rising into practice, but that, for want of fifty pounds, his chariot could not go abroad the next day, and his patients must remain unvisited. Quin bid him be comforted, and, stepping to his lodgings in Bedford street, returned with a bank-note for that sum, which he told Thompson he would not expect till he was able to repay it: the other answered, that a month was as long as he wished to retain it; but Quin told him that he could spare it for three, or even six months, and took his leave. Six months elapsed, and no apology made for non-payment of the money. Quin, in a civil letter, reminded Thompson of the terms on which it was lent, but receiving no answer to that and others that he wrote, he was obliged to send him one by his attorney, which produced a notification from the duke of Newcastle's office, that the name of Dr. Thompson was there entered as of a person privileged from arrests, and that it would be at Mr. Quin's peril if he proceeded to violate that protection which he claimed, and the law granted him. Being thus prohibited from the restraint of his person, Quin was obliged to wait the re-payment of his money, which,

which, at the expiration of some months, he received, but without the least acknowledgment of his kindness in lending it.

This was a man whom Whitehead, in the simplicity of his heart, held in such estimation, that I have seen him, for hours together, listening, with his lips unclosed, to the torrents of nonsense he was pouring forth: he addressed an epistle to him, wherein he celebrates his medical abilities and moral qualities, and makes the number of persons daily restored by him to health, equal to those who were sent to their long-homes by Wilmot and the other eminent physicians his rivals and contemporaries.

Notwithstanding the advantages with which he set out, and the extravagant encomiums of Fielding and others, of him and his practice, Thompson sunk into contempt and obscurity. Like Paracelsus, he performed a few cures, that neither himself nor any others were ever able to account for; and in a case of surgery he was once known, by dint of mere obstinacy, to have saved a limb. A son of a friend of mine, an officer, being in the service in Germany, and at the head of a skirmishing-party on horseback, received a wound with a sabre that separated the tendons and ligaments which connect the foot with the leg: at a consultation on his case of two of the most eminent surgeons, Thompson, as being the family physician, was called to assist, who, in opposition to their opinion that an amputation was inevitable, swore that his friend should not undergo it: the operation was deferred, and by the help of the Malvern waters, the patient recovered such an use of the whole limb as enabled him to walk with scarce any variation of his accustomed gait.

Had Johnson accepted of Mr. Dodington's invitation, it cannot be supposed that he would have been much pleased with the company of these and such other persons as it was likely to introduce him to. His declining it seems, therefore, an act of great prudence, and indeed he was exempted from the necessity of seeking connections; for many persons were of Dodington's mind, and were desirous of adding him to the number of their friends. Invitations to dine with such of those as he liked, he so seldom declined, that, to a friend of his, he said, 'I never but once, upon a resolution to employ myself in study, balked an invitation out to dinner, and then I stayed at home and did nothing.' Little, however, did that laxity of temper, which this confession seems to imply, retard the progress of the great work in which he was employed: the conclusion, and also the perfection of his dictionary, were objects from which his attention was not to be diverted: the avocations he gave way to were such only as, when complied with, served to invigorate his mind to the performance of his engagements to his employers and the public, and hasten the approach of the day that was to reward his labour with applause.

That day it was his happiness to see; for, by the end of the year 1754, he had completed his copy, not more to his own ease and satisfaction, than to the joy of Millar the bookseller, the principal proprietor of the work, and the guardian or treasurer of the fund out of which the payments were from time to time issued. To say the truth, his joy on the occasion was so great, that he could not refrain from expressing it somewhat intemperately, as appears by the following acknowledgment

acknowledgment of the receipt of the last sheet of the manuscript :

‘ Andrew Millar sends his compliments to Mr. Samuel Johnson, with the money for the last sheet of copy of the Dictionary, and thanks God he has done with him.’

To which Johnson returned this good-humoured and brief answer :

‘ Samuel Johnson returns his compliments to Mr. Andrew Millar, and is very glad to find, as he does by his note, that Andrew Millar has the grace to thank God for any thing.’

The publication of this great work soon followed, as may be imagined, the interchange of these two very laconic epistles ; and the month of May 1755, put the world in possession of a treasure, the value whereof it will require the experience of years to find out. To recommend it to the notice of foreigners, he was desirous it should appear to come from one who had attained academical honours : he therefore applied, by his friend Mr. Thomas Warton, to the university of Oxford for a master’s degree, and obtained it by a diploma, dated the tenth day of February 1755, the tenour whereof is, that the most learned Samuel Johnson, of Pembroke college, having distinguished himself in the literary world by his writings, tending to form the popular manners ; and having, for the adorning and settling his native language, compiled, and being about to publish an English dictionary, the chancellor, masters, and scholars of the said University, in solemn convocation assembled, do therefore constitute and appoint the said Samuel

Johnson, Master of Arts, and command, that he enjoy and exercise all the rights, privileges, and honours to that degree appertaining.

Upon the receipt of this instrument, Johnson testified his gratitude for the honour done him, in a letter to the vice-chancellor, which, as a specimen of a fine Latin style, I here insert :

‘ Reverendo admodum viro G. Huddesford, S. T. P.

‘ Oxoniensis academix Vice-cancellario dignissimo.

‘ Ingratus plane et tibi et mihi videar, nisi quanto
 ‘ me gaudio affecerint, quos nuper mihi honores, te
 ‘ credo auctore, decrevit senatus academicus, litera-
 ‘ rum, quo tamen nihil levius, officio significem :
 ‘ ingratus etiam, nisi comitatem, qua vir eximius *
 ‘ mihi vestri testimonium amoris in manus tradidit,
 ‘ agnoscam et laudem. Siquid est, unde rei tam
 ‘ gratæ accedat gratia, hoc ipso magis mihi placet,
 ‘ quod eo tempore in ordines academicos denuo
 ‘ cooptatus sim, quo tuam imminuere auctoritatem,
 ‘ famamque Oxoniæ lædere, omnibus modis conantur
 ‘ homines vafri nec tamen acuti : quibus ego, prout
 ‘ viro umbratico licuit, semper restiti, semper resti-
 ‘ turus. Qui enim, inter has rerum procellas, vel
 ‘ tibi vel academix defuerit, illum virtuti, et literis,
 ‘ sibi que, et posteris, defuturum existimo.’

‘ S. JOHNSON.’

So near perfection had the author brought his dictionary, that, upon a review of it previous to his drawing up the preface, he declares, he is unable to detect the casual omission of more than one article,

* The Vir eximius above-mentioned is Dr. King of St. Mary hall, who delivered the diploma to Johnson in London.

the appellative OCEAN. Nor has he, as I know, been charged with any other defect, or with any misinterpretation of a word, save in an instance or two, where, being moved by party-prejudice, he has imposed significations on a few words that are indefensible. Let these be imputed to a mind agonized, at various periods during the prosecution of this laborious work, with indigence, with sorrow, and pain; and let the piteous description of his circumstances and feelings, which the preface contains, induce us to bury our resentment of a few petulant expressions, in the reflection, that this stupendous compilation was undertaken and completed by the care and industry of a single person.

Upon occasion of publishing the dictionary, Mr. Garrick celebrated the author in the following lines:

- ‘ Talk of war with a Briton, he’ll boldly advance,
- ‘ That one English soldier will beat ten of France;
- ‘ Would we alter the boast from the sword to the pen,
- ‘ Our odds are still greater, still greater our men:
- ‘ In the deep mines of science though Frenchmen may
toil,
- ‘ Can their strength be compar’d to Locke, Newton,
and Boyle?
- ‘ Let them rally their heroes, send forth all their
pow’rs,
- ‘ Their verse-men and prose-men; then match them
with ours:
- ‘ First Shakespeare and Milton, like Gods in the
fight,
- ‘ Have put their whole drama and epic to flight;

‘ In fatires, epistles, and odes, would they cope,
 ‘ Their numbers retreat before Dryden and Pope;
 ‘ And Johnson, well-arm’d like a hero of yore,
 ‘ Has beat forty* French, and will beat forty more.’

It has already been mentioned, that Johnson’s inducement to this undertaking was the offer of a liberal reward. The term liberal is indefinite, and, after the lapse of twenty years, during which such sums as from three to eight thousand pounds have been paid for copies, would hardly be allowed to fifteen hundred and seventy-five †, which was the sum stipulated for the dictionary. Of this, Johnson, who was no very accurate accountant, thought a great part would be coming to him on the conclusion of the work; but upon producing, at a tavern-meeting for the purpose of settling, receipts for sums advanced to him, which were indeed the chief means of his subsistence, it was found, not only that he had eaten his cake, but that the balance of the account was greatly against him. His debtors were now become his creditors; but they, in a perfect consistency with that liberal spirit, which, in fundry instances, the great book-sellers are known to have exercised towards authors, remitted the difference, and consoled him for his disappointment by making his entertainment at the tavern a treat §. The

* The number of the French academy employed in settling their language.

† From the original contract now in my hand, dated 18th June 1746, between Johnson on the one part, and the two Knaptons, the two Longmans, Charles Hitch, Andrew Millar, and Robert Dodsley on the other.

§ Mr. William Caslon the letter-founder, grandfather of the present

The pointing out the utility of such a work as a vernacular lexicon is needless, and the displaying the merits of that of which I am speaking, is a labour which the suffrage of the public has saved me. The learned world had long wished for its appearance, and the circulation of the book was proportionate to the impatience which the promise of it had excited. Lord Corke, being at Florence at the time when it was published, presented it, in the author's name, to the academy della Crusca, and that learned body transmitted to him a fine copy of their Vocabulario. The French academy also signified their approbation of his labours, by a present of their Dictionnaire, of which Mr. Langton was the bearer. To these testimonies of public respect, it is a small but ludicrous addition to say, that Dr. Robertson, the Scots historian, told Johnson, that he had fairly perused his dictionary twice over, and that Johnson was pleased at the hearing it. The dictionary was a library-book, and not adapted to common use: the booksellers knowing this, and being encouraged by its success, easily prevailed on the author to abridge it in two octavo volumes, and made him a liberal recompence.

It was doubtless a great satisfaction to Johnson to have completed this great work; and though we may

present Mr. Casson, once told me, that the booksellers with whom Mr. Chambers had contracted for his dictionary, finding that the work succeeded beyond their expectations, made him a voluntary present of, I think, 500*l*. Other instances of the like generosity have been known of a profession of men, who, in the debates of the question of literary property, have been described as scandalous monopolizers, fattening at the expence of other mens' ingenuity, and growing opulent by oppression.

believe

believe him in the declaration at the end of the preface thereto, that he dismissed it with frigid tranquillity, we cannot but suppose that he was pleased with the reception it met with. One and only one writer, excited by that envy and malice which had been long rankling in his breast, attempted to disturb the quiet which possessed him, by animadverting on this and other of his writings: this was a Dr. Kenrick, the author of many scurrilous publications now deservedly forgotten, who, in a small volume intitled 'Lexiphanes,' endeavoured to turn many passages in the Rambler, and interpretations in the dictionary, into ridicule; gratifying his spleen also with a number of malevolent censures of Dr. Akenfide's 'Pleasures of Imagination.' It was the purpose of this libel to provoke both or one of the persons who were the subjects of it, to a controversy, from which, whatever should be the event, he hoped, as it is said Ulysses did in his contest with Ajax, to derive honour.

'Iste tulit pretium jam nunc certaminis hujus;

'Quo cum victus erit, mecum certasse feretur.'

OVID. Met. lib. xiii. v. 19.

'Losing he wins, because his name will be

'Ennobled by defeat, who durst contend with me.'

DRYDEN.

But in this he was disappointed. Akenfide was too proud to dispute with an inferior, and Johnson's silence proceeded not more from his contempt of such an adversary, than from a settled resolution he had formed, of declining all controversy in defence either of himself or his writings. Against personal abuse

abuse he was ever armed, by a reflection, that I have heard him utter: ‘Alas! reputation would be of little worth, were it in the power of every concealed enemy to deprive us of it;’—and he defied all attacks on his writings, by an answer of Dr. Bentley to one who threatened to write him down,—that ‘no author was ever written down but by himself.’

His steady perseverance in this resolution afforded him great satisfaction whenever he reflected on it; and he would often felicitate himself, that, throughout his life, he had had firmness enough to treat with contempt the calumny and abuse as well of open as concealed enemies, and the malevolence of those anonymous scriblers, whose trade is slander, and wages infamy.

Had Pope pursued the same conduct, and forborne his revenge on Theobald, Cibber, and others who had provoked him, he had enjoyed his muse and that philosophical tranquility which he did but affect, and lived and died with dignity. The younger Richardson once told me, that, upon the publication of Cibber’s second letter, he came to his father’s house in Lincoln’s-inn fields, and, upon entering the room where he was painting, with a countenance that spoke the anguish of his soul, exclaimed, ‘So, I find another letter is come out:’ but, continued he, ‘such things are sport to me:’ in which assertion we may suppose him to be as sincere as that poet of whom a story goes, that, talking with a friend, of the critics, he said, he had a way of dealing with them; for, whenever they condemned his verses, he laughed at it. ‘Do you so?’ says his friend, ‘then, let me tell
‘ you,

‘ you, you live the merriest life of any man in England.’

That Bentley’s observation is founded in truth and a knowledge of mankind, is proved by the rank which Sir Richard Blackmore now holds among the English poets. At the time when he lived, the wits were in confederacy against him ; and so many are the lampoons, epigrams, and other satirical compositions extant, tending to blast his reputation as a poet*, that the reader of them would incline to think, that in all his works there is scarce a good line or sentiment. All this, as Johnson relates, Blackmore foresaw, and, with a dignity of mind that merits praise, despised : the consequence is, that his poem, intitled ‘ Creation,’ is not written down, but yet lives in the esteem of every judicious reader, and in that most elegant encomium, which Mr. Addison has bestowed on it in the Spectator † ; and Dennis, one of the severest of critics, has given it greater praise than he ever vouchsafed to any modern composition, saying, that it is ‘ a philosophical poem, which has equalled that of Lucretius in the beauty of its versification, and infinitely surpassed it in the solidity and strength of its reasoning.’

To be insensible of, and undisturbed by, the envy and malice of others, is one of the strongest proofs of a great mind, and, as it is the most justifiable, so is it the severest revenge we can take ; for what sight can be more ridiculous, than that of a crea-

* See the works of Mr. Thomas Brown, in 4 vols. 12mo. and Pope and Swift’s miscellany.

† No. 339.

ture venting its rage on a subject that cannot feel? To live in the dread of slander, and to regulate our conduct by the opinions, the whispers, the surmises, or threats of either foolish or wicked men, is the worst of all slavery: of him who cannot defy every attempt of this kind to disturb his peace, but must be whining and complaining of that enmity which, perhaps, does him honour, and scribbling to refute those calumnies which no one will believe, it may be said, as we say of a man labouring under a mortal disease: ‘He is no man for this world.’ If he chooses a contrary course to that above-recommended, he does the work of those that hate him, and will be sure to feel the pangs of resentment, and forego the enjoyment of a tranquil mind, and a conscience void of offence, so feelingly described in this sentence of lord Bacon: ‘Certainly it is heaven
 ‘ upon earth to have a man’s mind move in Charity,
 ‘ rest in Providence, and turn upon the poles of
 ‘ Truth.’

If Johnson could ever be said to be idle, now was the time. He had, for nine years, been employed in his great work, and had finished it: he had closed the Rambler; and the Adventurer was closed on him. He had it now in his choice to reassume some one or other of those various literary projects, which he had formed in the early part of his life, and are enumerated in a foregoing page of these memoirs; but the powers of his mind, distended by long and severe exercise, became relaxed, and required rest to bring them to their tone, and it was some time before he could resolve on any employment, suited to his abilities, that carried with it any prospect of pleasure,
 or

or hope of reward. This remission of his labour, which seemed to be no more than nature herself called for, Johnson, in those severe audits to which it was his practice to summon himself, would frequently condemn, styling it a waste of his time, and a misapplication of the talents with which he was gratefully conscious that God had endowed him. Yet herein was he greatly mistaken; for though Milton says of the servants of God,

‘ ————— thousands at his bidding speed,
‘ And post o’er land and ocean without rest;’

he adds, that

‘ They also serve who only stand and wait.’

Sonnet on his blindness.

Johnson’s intellectual faculties could never be unemployed: when he was not writing he was thinking, and his thoughts had ever a tendency to the good of mankind; and that indolence, which, in his hours of contrition, he censured as criminal, needed little expiation.

This recess from literary occupation continued, however, no longer than was absolutely necessary. It has already been shewn, that he was not only a friend to such vehicles of literary intelligence as Magazines and other epitomes of large works, but that he was a frequent contributor to them. He had occasionally, for Cave’s Magazine, written the lives of Father Paul Sarpi, Boerhaave, the admirals Drake and Blake, Barretier, and divers other eminent persons; and also, sundry philological essays,

essays, particularly a state of the controversy between Croufaz and Warburton respecting the 'Essay on Man,' and a vision intitled 'the Apotheosis of Milton.' Cave being now dead, he ceased to furnish articles for that publication, and either voluntarily offered, or suffered himself to be retained as a writer in others of a like kind: accordingly, in 1756, he wrote for 'the Universal Visitor, or Monthly Memorialist,' printed for Gardner*, two of three letters therein inserted, on the subject of agriculture; and in the same and subsequent year, he assumed or submitted to the office of a reviewer, as it is called, for the publisher of a monthly collection, intitled, 'The Literary Magazine,' of which one Faden, a printer, was the editor. In this he wrote the address to the public; also, reviews of the following books, viz. Soame Jenyns's free enquiry into the nature and origin of evil; Dr. Blackwell's Memoirs of the court of Augustus; he wrote also therein, Observations on the state of affairs in 1756, and the Life of the present king of Prussia; and, Hanway's journal coming in his way, which contained in it a severe censure of the practice of tea-drinking, he officially, as I may say, and with a degree of alacrity proportioned to his avowed love of that liquor, undertook to criticise the book, and refute the arguments of the author.

To render this controversy intelligible, it is necessary I should state the grounds on which it proceeded.—Mr. Jonas Hanway had, in the year 1755, undertaken and

* The writers in this publication were, Christopher Smart, Richard Rolt, Mr. Garrick, and Dr. Percy, now bishop of Dromore. Their papers are signed with the initials of their surnames; Johnson's have this mark * *.

performed a journey from Portsmouth to Kingston upon Thames, through Southampton, Wiltshire, &c. which, though completed in the space of eight days, and attended with no extraordinary circumstances, was, it seems, in his judgment, worthy of being recorded, and, by means of the press, transmitted to posterity; and accordingly he gave a relation of it to the public, in two octavo volumes. It may be needless to say, that this work abounds with miscellaneous thoughts, moral and religious, and also political reflections; for of which of all his numerous productions cannot the same be said? Connected with it is ‘An
 ‘ Essay on Tea, considered as pernicious to health,
 ‘ obstructing industry, and impoverishing the nation,
 ‘ with an account of its growth, and great consumption in these kingdoms *.’

As

* Mr. Hanway seems not very accurate in his state of the time when tea was first brought into England. He says, that lord Arlington and lord Ossory introduced it in 1666, and that it was then admired as a new thing. Waller has a poem addressed to the queen, Maria d’Este, wife of Ja. II. in 1683, ‘On tea
 ‘ commended by her majesty,’ whereby it seems, that even then it was a new thing.

It is a question of some curiosity, and worthy investigation, what were the viands of a morning meal with people of condition, for which tea with its concomitants is now the substitute; and I am glad to be able to resolve it by the following extract from the Northumberland household book, in which is contained the regulations and establishment of the household of Henry Algernon Percy, the fifth earl of Northumberland, at his castles of Wresill and Leckinfield in Yorkshire, begun anno domini 1512.

‘ Braikfastis for FLESH DAYS.

‘ Braikfastis for my Lorde and my lady.

‘ Furst, a loof of brede in trenchors, 2 manchetts, 1 quart
 of

As I do not mean to follow this author in the course of an argument conducted in no method, interrupted by a redundancy of foreign matter, and which violates every rule in logic, I shall content myself with remarking, that though every one of his three assertions may be true, he has succeeded in the proof of no one of them. That tea is a luxury, and not a fit aliment for the poor, is implied in a sarcasm of Swift to this purpose, that the world must be encompassed, that is to say, by a voyage to the East Indies for tea, and another to the West for sugar,

‘ of bere, a quart of wine, half a chyne of mutton, or ells a chyne
‘ of beif boiled.

‘ Braikfastis for the Nurcy, for my Lady Margaret,
‘ and Mr. Yngram Percy.

‘ Item, a manchet, 1 quarte of bere, and 3 muton bonys
‘ boiled.

‘ Braikfastis for my Ladys Gentyllwomen.

‘ Item, a loif of houshold breid, a pottell of beire, and 3 muton
‘ bonys boyled, or ells a pece of beif boiled.

‘ LENT.

‘ Braikfaste for my Lorde and my Lady.

‘ Furst, a loif of brede in trenchors, 2 manchets, a quart of
‘ bere, a quart of wyne, 2 pecys of saltfish, 6 baconn’d herrying,
‘ 4 white herring or a dysche of sproits.

‘ Braikfaste for the Nurcy, for my Lady Margaret,
‘ and Maister Ingeram Percy.

‘ Item, a manchet, a quarte of bere, a dysch of butter, a pece
‘ of saltfish, a disch of sproits, or 3 white herrying.

‘ Braikfaste for my Ladys Gentyllwomen.

‘ Item, a loof of brede, a pottell of bere, a pece of saltfische, or
‘ 3 white herrynge.’

before a washerwoman can sit down to breakfast. That it is pernicious to health is disputed by physicians: Quincy commends it, as an elegant and wholesome beverage; Cheyne condemns it, as prejudicial to the nervous system. Bishop Burnet, for many years, drank sixteen large cups of it every morning, and never complained that it did him the least injury. The two last objections, that tea is an obstruction to industry, and that it impoverishes the nation, are political questions which I am not able to decide upon.

Epictetus somewhere advises us to consider the gratification of the calls of hunger and thirst, as acts of necessity; to be performed as it were by the bye, but by no means to be estimated among the enjoyments of life; and by a precept no less than divine, we are exhorted to take no thought what we shall eat or what we shall drink. Johnson looked upon the former as a very serious business, and enjoyed the pleasures of a splendid table equally with most men. It was, at no time of his life, pleasing to see him at a meal; the greediness with which he ate, his total inattention to those among whom he was seated, and his profound silence in the hour of refection, were circumstances that at the instant degraded him, and shewed him to be more a sensualist than a philosopher. Moreover, he was a lover of tea to an excess hardly credible; whenever it appeared, he was almost raving, and by his impatience to be served, his incessant calls for those ingredients which make that liquor palatable, and the haste with which he swallowed it down, he seldom failed to make that a fatigue to every one else, which was intended as a general refreshment. Such
signs

signs of effeminacy as these, suited but ill with the appearance of a man, who, for his bodily strength and stature, has been compared to Polyphemus.

This foible in Johnson's character being known, it will excite no wonder in the reader to be told, that he readily embraced the opportunity of defending his own practice, by an examen of Hanway's book. Accordingly, he began his remarks on it in the Literary Magazine, Number VII *, but receiving from this author an injunction to forbear proceeding in his censure till a second edition should appear, he submitted, though it was a prohibition that could neither be reasonably imposed, nor by any means enforced; yet, such was its effect, that Mr. Hanway's journal was not remarked on, till he had been allowed every advantage that could protect it from censure.

Such candour on the part of him, on whose opinion perhaps many were waiting to form theirs, might have relieved the author from any dread of unfair treatment; but Johnson, who paid all proper deference to good intentions, did not think this tacit indication of the temper in which he sat down to review Mr. Hanway's journal, sufficient: he, therefore, in resuming the dispute, promises him, that he shall find no malignity of censure, and draws a very handsome inference from the contents of his thirty-two letters, that he is a man whose failings may well be pardoned for his virtues.

The criticism on this second edition appeared in the Literary Magazine, Number XIII †, and extends

* From 15th Oct. to 15th Nov. 1756.

† From 15th April to 15th May, 1757.

chiefly to Mr. Hanway's arguments against tea and gin : subjects which seem to have inspired him with such enthusiastic eloquence as disdained all the rules of logic, and dictated observations and conclusions, so incoherent and incongruous, as would have stimulated even those, who, in the main, thought with him, to an endeavour at correcting his judgment.

But, in Johnson, when writing on the qualities of tea, he met with an opponent on principle ; for its antagonist's hatred, however radical or zealous, could not exceed the love its champion bore it : he describes himself as ' a hardened and shameless tea-drinker, ' who has, for many years, diluted his meals with ' only the infusion of this fascinating plant ; whose ' kettle has scarcely time to cool ; who, with tea ' amuses the evening, with tea solaces the mid- ' nights, and with tea welcomes the morning.'

That Mr. Hanway was right in asserting, that the practice of drinking tea is productive of harm among the lower classes of people, must certainly be admitted ; and that Johnson was right in denying that it has all the poisonous qualities the Journal attributes to it, experience shews. From what has been said on both sides, little can be inferred, but that to some it is noxious, and to others neutral ; that those do wrong who persist in the use of it when they find it injurious to their health, and that such as cannot afford the necessaries of life, ought not to indulge in its luxuries.

At Johnson's candid examen, which should not have offended Mr. Hanway, as, by submitting his work to public inspection, he recognized the right of public criticism, the latter was extremely irritated, and
very

very unadvisedly drew his reviewer forth to a second exertion of his argumentative powers, printed in the same Magazine, vol. ii. 253, under the title of ‘A reply to a paper in the Gazetteer of May 26, 1757,’ in which, with seeming contrition and mock penitence he requests to know how he has offended, and deprecates the wrath he had excited.—‘There are only three subjects,’ says he, ‘upon which my unlucky pen has happened to venture. Tea, the author of the Journal, and the Foundling hospital.’

‘Of the author, I unfortunately said, that his injunction was too magisterial. This I said, before I knew he was a governor of the foundlings; but he seems inclined to punish this failure of respect, as the czar of Muscovy made war upon Sweden, because he was not treated with sufficient honours when he passed through the country in disguise. Yet was not this irreverence without extenuation. Something was said of the merit of *meaning well*, and the journalist was declared to be a man *whose failings might well be pardoned for his virtues*. This is the highest praise which human gratitude can confer upon human merit, praise that would have more than satisfied *Titus* or *Augustus*, but which I must own to be inadequate and penurious, when offered to the member of an important corporation.’

His justification of what he said of the author, he concludes thus:—‘As the journalist, though enthusiastically zealous for his country, has, with regard to smaller things, the placid happiness of philosophical indifference, I can give him no disturbance by advising him to restrain even the love of his country within due limits, lest it should sometimes

‘ swell too high, fill the whole capacity of his soul,
 ‘ and leave less room for the love of truth.’

Unluckily for Mr. Hanway it happened, that while he was labouring for the general good, by reprobating the practice of drinking tea, an institution from which he derived much of his importance, was suffering from want of care. Johnson, in a visit to the Foundling hospital, observed, that the objects of the charity, however well provided for in other respects, were, in the essential point of religious knowledge, lamentably deficient. To him, who considered wisely that there was no evil from which the governors of the Foundling hospital could rescue deserted infants, so much to be dreaded as ignorance of this kind, the answers given to his enquiries touching their improvement were very unsatisfactory. Without knowing that Mr. Hanway was concerned in the charge, he, in his former letter had stated this fact, and followed it by saying, that ‘ to breed up children in this manner, is
 ‘ to rescue them from an early grave, that they may
 ‘ find employment for the gibbet, from dying in in-
 ‘ nocence, that they may perish by their crimes.’

The laudable motive which induced Johnson to point out this neglect, and the justice of his remark, did not shield him from unmerited resentment. He was called on to support what he had advanced: his assertion was branded with the epithet of *incredible*, but his observation had produced its effect: he had found means to have it represented to one of the highest names of the society, and a catechist was soon after appointed.

On a review of the eloquence he had been forced to encounter, he says of his adversary,——‘ His argu-
 ‘ mentation,

‘mentation, being somewhat enthusiastical, I cannot
‘fully comprehend, but it seems to stand thus. My
‘insinuations are foolish or malicious, since I know
‘not one of the governors of the hospital; for he
‘that knows not the governors of the hospital must
‘be very foolish or malicious.

‘He has, however, so much kindness for me, that
‘he advises me to consult my own safety when I talk
‘of corporations. I know not what the most impor-
‘tant corporation could do, becoming manhood,
‘by which my safety is endangered. My reputation
‘is safe, for I can prove the fact; my quiet is safe,
‘for I meant well; and for any other safety, I am not
‘used to be very solicitous.

‘I am always sorry when I see any being labouring
‘in vain; and, in return for the journalift’s attention
‘to my safety, I will confess some compassion for his
‘tumultuous resentment; since all his invectives fume
‘into the air, with so little effect upon me, that I still
‘esteem him as one that has the *merit of meaning well*,
‘and still believe him to be *a man whose failings may*
‘*be justly pardoned for his virtues.*’

Whoever peruses this controversy, will be forced to
confess that, on the part of Johnson, it is conducted,
not only with candour, but with great good humour,
a circumstance to be remarked in all his polemical
writings, and to be wondered at, seeing that in oral
disputation his behaviour was so different, as to ex-
pose him to the severest censures. His exertions
against his adversary were play, not hostility;

‘Sporting the lion ramp’d, and in his paw
‘Dandled the kid.’

Paradise Lost, book iv. line 343.

By the virtues of Mr. Hanway, which Johnson is so ready to acknowledge, we are to understand, that active and unwearied benevolence, which, for a series of years, he has been exercising for the benefit of society, and by his failings, or rather failing, for I know of but one he has, a propensity to writing and publishing books, which, for the triteness and inanity of the sentiments contained in them, no one can read.

About the year 1756, time had produced a change in the situation of many of Johnson's friends, who were used to meet him in Ivy lane. Death had taken from us M'Ghie; Barker went to settle as a practising physician at Trowbridge; Dyer went abroad; Hawkesworth was busied in forming new connections; and I had lately made one that removed from me all temptations to pass my evenings from home. The consequence was, that our symposium at the King's head broke up, and he who had first formed us into a society was left with fewer around him than were able to support it.

All this while, the booksellers, who by his own confession were his best friends, had their eyes upon Johnson, and reflected with some concern on what seemed to them a misapplication of his talents. The furnishing magazines, reviews, and even newspapers, with literary intelligence, and the authors of books, who could not write them for themselves, with dedications and prefaces, they looked on as employments beneath him, who had attained to such eminence as a writer; they, therefore, in the year 1756, found out for him such a one as seemed to afford a prospect both of amusement and profit: this was an edition of Shakespeare's dramatic works, which,

which, by a concurrence of circumstances, was now become necessary, to answer the increasing demand of the public for the writings of that author.

Mr. Garrick, who, as every one knows, was in all that related to Shakespeare an enthusiast, had, by the study of his principal characters, and his own exquisite action, so recommended Shakespeare to the town, that the admiration of him became general even to affectation; many professing to be delighted with the performance and perusal of his plays, who, from their want of literature, and their ignorance of the phraseology of the age in which they were written, could not be supposed capable of construing them. Others there were, in whom a literary curiosity had been excited, by the publication of such editions of this author as tended to settle his text, and by a description of ancient manners and customs of living, to render him intelligible. The first essay of this kind, worth noting, was the edition of Theobald, the defects whereof, in the single opinion of Warburton, were so many and great, as to render that necessary which bears his name.

The two classes of readers, here discriminated, amounted to such a number as encouraged the booksellers to an edition on the plan of the two former, and Johnson was the person, whom, of all others, they thought the fittest to undertake it: the terms settled between them were, that Johnson should receive for his own use the profits arising from a subscription to the first impression, and that the copy-right should remain with the then possessors. The first notification of this design was, a proposal drawn

drawn up by Johnson, setting forth the incorrectness of the early editions, the original obscurity and subsequent corruptions of the text, the necessity of notes, and the failures of former editors.

A stranger to Johnson's character and temper would have thought, that the study of an author, whose skill in the science of human life was so deep, and whose perfections were so many and various as to be above the reach of all praise, must have been the most pleasing employment that his imagination could suggest, but it was not so: in a visit that he one morning made to me, I congratulated him on his being now engaged in a work that suited his genius, and that, requiring none of that severe application which his dictionary had condemned him to, I doubted not would be executed *con amore*.——His answer was, 'I look upon
' this as I did upon the dictionary: it is all work, and
' my inducement to it is not love or desire of fame,
' but the want of money, which is the only motive
' to writing that I know of.'——And the event was evidence to me, that in this speech he declared his genuine sentiments; for neither in the first place did he set himself to collect early editions of his author, old plays, translations of histories, and of the classics, and other materials necessary for his purpose, nor could he be prevailed on to enter into that course of reading, without which it seemed impossible to come at the sense of his author. It was provoking to all his friends to see him waste his days, his weeks, and his months so long, that they feared a mental lethargy had seized him, out of which he would never recover. In this, however, they were happily deceived, for, after

two years inactivity, they find him roused to action, and engaged—not in the prosecution of the work, for the completion whereof he stood doubly bound, but in a new one, the furnishing a series of periodical essays, intitled, and it may be thought not improperly, ‘The Idler,’ as his motive to the employment was aversion to a labour he had undertaken, though in the execution, it must be owned, it merited a better name.

As Johnson was diverted from his work of Shakespeare, so am I from my purpose of tracing the progress of it, being to relate the occurrences of nine years of his life before I can congratulate the reader on its appearance.

The engagement for the Idler was with Newbery the bookseller, a man of a projecting head, a good understanding, and great integrity; and who, by a fortunate connection with Dr. James the physician, and the honest exertions of his own industry, became the founder of a family. Taking advantage of that rage for intelligence, which the successes of the war had excited, in even the lowest order of the people, he planned a weekly paper, which he called ‘The Universal Chronicle,’ and, as the size of it rendered it susceptible of more matter than the occurrences, during the intervals of its publication, would supply, it was part of his scheme, that it should contain an essay or short discourse on such subjects of morality, or of wit and humour, as, in former instances, had been found to engage the attention of the public. A share in the profits of this paper was Johnson’s inducement to the furnishing such a discourse, and, accordingly, it appeared, on Saturday the fifteenth day
of

of April 1758, and continued to be published on the same day in every week for near two years thence following.

The profits accruing from the sale of this paper, and the subscriptions which, from the year 1756, he was receiving for the edition of Shakespeare by him proposed, were the only known means of his subsistence for a period of near four years, and we may suppose them hardly adequate to his wants, for, upon finding the balance of the account for the dictionary against him, he quitted his house in Gough square, and took chambers in Gray's inn; and Mrs. Williams, upon this removal, fixed herself in lodgings at a boarding-school in the neighbourhood of their former dwelling.

About this time he had, from a friend who highly esteemed him*, the offer of a living, of which he might have rendered himself capable by entering into holy orders: it was a rectory, in a pleasant country, and of such a yearly value as might have tempted one in better circumstances than himself to accept it; but he had scruples about the duties of the ministerial function, that he could not, after deliberation, overcome. 'I have not,' said he, 'the requisites for the office, and I cannot, in my conscience, shear that flock which I am unable to feed.'—Upon conversing with him on that inability which was his reason for declining the offer, it was found to be a suspicion of his patience to undergo the fatigue of catechising and instructing a great number of poor ignorant persons,

* Mr. Langton, of Langton in Lincolnshire, the father of his much-beloved friend Bennet Langton, Esq; mentioned in the codicil to his will, and husband of the countess dowager of Rothes,

who, in religious matters, had, perhaps, every thing to learn.

Thus scrupulously did he think of the nature of the ministerial office, and thus did he testify the sincerity of those censures, which he would sometimes pass on the conduct of the generality of the clergy of his time; for though, as a body of men, he held them in great veneration, and was ever ready to defend them against the encroachments of some, and the reproaches of others of the ignorant laity, he exacted from all who had the cure of souls a punctilious discharge of their duty, and held in utter detestation those who, renouncing their garb and clerical character, affected to appear men of the world.

He thought of Dr. Clarke, whose sermons he valued above all other, that he complied too frequently with invitations to dine with persons of high rank, his parishioners, and spent too much of his time in ceremonious visits: differing in this respect from his contemporary Smalridge, the elegant Favonius of the Tatler, who, in the height of his reputation as a preacher, was ever ready to visit a sick person in the most obscure alley of Westminster.

In the beginning of the year 1759, and while the Idler continued to be published, an event happened, for which it might be imagined he was well prepared, the death of his mother, who had then attained the age of ninety; but he, whose mind had acquired no firmness by the contemplation of mortality, was as little able to sustain the shock as he would have been had this loss befallen him in his nonage. It is conjectured that, for many years before her decease, she derived almost the whole of her support from this
her

her dutiful son, whose filial piety was ever one of the most distinguishable features in his character*. Report says, but rather vaguely, that, to supply her necessities in her last illness, he wrote and made money of his 'Rasselas,' a tale of his invention, numbered among the best of his writings, and published in the spring of 1759, a crisis that gives credit to such a supposition. No. 41 of the Idler, though it pretends to be a letter to the author, was written by Johnson himself, on occasion of his mother's death, and may be supposed to describe, as truly as pathetically, his sentiments on the separation of friends and relations. The fact, respecting the writing and publishing the story of Rasselas is, that finding the Eastern Tales written by himself in the Rambler, and by Hawkesworth in the Adventurer, had been well received, he had been for some time meditating a fictitious history, of a greater extent than any that had appeared in either of those papers, which might serve as a vehicle to convey to the world his sentiments of human life and the dispensations of Providence, and having digested his thoughts on the subject, he obeyed the spur of that necessity which now pressed him, and sat down to compose the tale above-mentioned, laying the scene of it in a country that he had before occasion to contemplate, in his translation of Padre Lobo's voyage.

As it was written to raise money, he did not long delay disposing of it; he gave it, as I have been told, to Mr. Baretti, to sell to that bookseller who would

* I find in his diary a note of the payment to Mr. Allen the printer, of six guineas, which he had borrowed of him, and sent to his dying mother.

give most for it, but the sum he got for it is variously reported. As none of his compositions have been more applauded than this, an examen of it in this place may not be improper, and the following may serve till a better shall appear.

Considered as a specimen of our language, it is scarcely to be paralleled: it is written in a style refined to a degree of immaculate purity, and displays the whole force of turgid eloquence.

But it was composed at a time when no spring like that in the mind of Rasselas urged his narrator; when the heavy hand of affliction almost bore him down, and the dread of future want haunted him. That he should have produced a tale fraught with lively imagery, or that he should have painted human life in gay colours, could not have been expected: he poured out his sorrow in gloomy reflection, and being destitute of comfort himself, described the world as nearly without it.

In a work of such latitude as this, where nothing could be impertinent, he had an opportunity of divulging his opinion on any point that he had thought on: he has therefore formed many conversations on topics that are known to have been subjects of his meditation, and has atoned for the paucity of his incidents by such discussions as are seldom attempted by the fabricators of romantic fiction.

Admitting that Johnson speaks in the person of the victor-disputant, we may, while he is unveiling the hearts of others, gain some knowledge of his own. He has in this Abyssinian tale given us what he calls a dissertation on poetry, and in it that which appears to
me

me a recipe for making a poet, from which may be inferred what he thought the necessary ingredients, and a reference to the passage will tend to corroborate an observation of Mr. Garrick's, that Johnson's poetical faculty was mechanical, and that what he wrote came not from his heart but from his head. Imlac, the guide of the prince, relates to him the events of his life, which are—That his father was a wealthy merchant, but a man of uncultivated intellects, who left the choice of a profession, with very little bias, to his son. The young man was disgusted with trade, and inclined to general learning; but finding, as he says, that poetry was considered as the highest learning, and regarded with veneration, he determined to become a poet. Ambition has seldom effected so stupendous a work as that of implanting poetic genius; but Imlac was resolved, and, if we may trust the account of his success, his design was not absurd: his industry was very commendable: he read all the poets of Arabia and Persia, and was able to repeat by memory the volumes that are suspended in the mosque of Mecca: he then ranged mountains and deserts for images and resemblances, and pictured on his mind every tree of the forest and flower of the valley: an ample collection drawn from rocks, palaces, rivulets, clouds, &c. stored his mind, and with the help of ethics, languages, and sciences, the resolute Imlac, who, till the age of twenty, had lived in ignorance, was by dint of mere industry transformed into a distinguished poet.

In the course of Imlac's narrative, Johnson animadverts on the supposed efficacy of pilgrimages: his

his argument decides nothing, but is conceived in such language, that none, how well acquainted soever with the book, will blame the insertion of it here.

‘ Pilgrimages, like many other acts of piety, may
 ‘ be reasonable or superstitious, according to the prin-
 ‘ ciples upon which they are performed. Long
 ‘ journeys in search of truth are not commanded.
 ‘ Truth, such as is necessary to the regulation of
 ‘ life, is always found where it is honestly sought.
 ‘ Change of place is no natural cause of the increase
 ‘ of piety, for it inevitably produces dissipation of
 ‘ mind. Yet, since men go every day to view the
 ‘ fields where great actions have been performed, and
 ‘ return with stronger impressions of the event, curio-
 ‘ sity of the same kind may naturally dispose us to view
 ‘ that country whence our religion had its beginning;
 ‘ and I believe no man surveys those awful scenes
 ‘ without some confirmation of holy resolutions.
 ‘ That the Supreme Being may be more easily
 ‘ propitiated in one place than in another, is the
 ‘ dream of idle superstition; but that some places
 ‘ may operate upon our own minds in an uncommon
 ‘ manner, is an opinion which hourly experience
 ‘ will justify. He who supposes that his vices may
 ‘ be more successfully combated in Palestine, will,
 ‘ perhaps, find himself mistaken, yet he may go
 ‘ thither without folly: he who thinks they will be
 ‘ more freely pardoned, dishonours at once his reason
 ‘ and religion.’

In a following chapter the danger of insanity is the subject of debate; and it cannot but excite the pity

of all those who gratefully accept and enjoy Johnson's endeavours to reform and instruct, to reflect that the peril he describes he believed impending over him. That he was conscious of superior talents will surely not be imputed to vanity: how deeply then must he have been depressed by the constant fear that in one moment he might and probably would be, not only deprived of his distinguished endowments, but reduced to a state little preferable, in as much as respects this world, to that of brutes! He has traced the misery of insanity from its cause to its effect, and seems to ascribe it to indulgence of imagination: he styles it one of the dangers of solitude, and perhaps to this dread and this opinion was his uncommon love of society to be attributed.

His superstitious ideas of the state of departed souls, and belief in supernatural agency, were produced by a mental disease, as impossible to be shaken off as corporal pain. What it has pleased Omnipotence to inflict, we need never seek to excuse; but he has provided against the cavils of those who cannot comprehend how a wise can ever appear a weak man, by remarking, that there is a natural affinity between melancholy and superstition.

In characterising this performance, it cannot be said, that it vindicates the ways of God to man. It is a general satire, representing mankind as eagerly pursuing what experience should have taught them they can never obtain: it exposes the weaknesses even of their laudable affections and propensities, and it resolves the mightiest as well as the most trivial of their labours, into folly.

I wish

I wish I were not warranted in saying, that this elegant work is rendered, by its most obvious moral, of little benefit to the reader. We would not indeed wish to see the rising generation so unprofitably employed as the prince of Abyssinia ; but it is equally impolitic to repress all hope, and he who should quit his father's house in search of a profession, and return unprovided, because he could not find any man pleased with his own, would need a better justification than that Johnson, after speculatively surveying various modes of life, had judged happiness unattainable, and choice useless.

But let those, who, reading *Rasselas* in the spring of life, are captivated by its author's eloquence, and convinced by his perspicacious wisdom that human life and hopes are such as he has depicted them, remember that he saw through the medium of adversity. The concurrent testimony of ages has, it is too true, proved, that there is no such thing as worldly felicity ; but it has never been proved, that, therefore we are miserable. Those who look only here for happiness, have ever been and ever will be disappointed : it is not change of place, nor even the unbounded gratification of their wishes that can relieve them ; but if they bend their attention towards the attainment of that felicity we are graciously promised, they will find no such vacuum as distressed *Rasselas* : the discharge of religious and social duties will afford their faculties the occupation he wanted, and the well-founded expectation of future reward will at once stimulate and support them.

The tale of *Rasselas* was written to answer a pressing necessity, and was so concluded as to admit of a

continuation ; and, in fact, Johnson had meditated a second part, in which he meant to marry his hero, and place him in a state of permanent felicity, but it fared with this resolution as it did with that of Dr. Young, who, in his estimate of human life, promised, as he had given the dark, so in a future publication he would display the bright side of his subject ; he never did it, for he had found out that it had no bright side, and Johnson had made much the same discovery, and that in this state of our existence all our enjoyments are fugacious, and permanent felicity unattainable.

Soon after the publication of *Rasselas*, and while he continued to write the *Idler*, Johnson was tempted to engage in a controversy on a subject with which, in the course of his studies, he had acquired but little knowledge, namely, the comparative strength of arches of different forms ; the occasion of it was, that after the passing of the act of parliament for building Black-Friars bridge, a variety of designs for it were tendered to the commissioners, who, after due consideration, reduced them to three. In two of these designs, the construction of the arches was semicircular ; in the third, exhibited by Mr. Mylne a Scotsman, it was elliptical.

Whether Johnson thought that the author of this last proposal, as being a native of North Britain, merited to be treated as an intruder, or that he was induced by better motives to oppose his scheme, cannot be determined : this, at least, is certain, that he took up the resolution before he was qualified to debate the question, for I have it from undoubted authority,

authority, that in order thereto, he procured from a person eminently skilled in mathematics and the principles of architecture, answers to a string of questions drawn up by himself, touching the comparative strength of semicircular and elliptical arches. These I myself have seen, and the answers determine in favour of the semicircular.

If the former of the considerations above suggested, was at any time, or in any degree, Johnson's motive for opposing Mr. Mylne, he ought to have reflected, that at a period when we had no better architects than Vanbrugh, Hawksmoor *, James and Kent among us †, Campbell and Gibbs ‡, both Scotsmen, had adorned this country with some stately and elegant edifices ; and if the latter was his inducement, he should have reflected, that his arguments were

* Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor had such ideas of beauty and harmony as have no archetypes in the material world : the latter in an evil hour was employed by the commissioners for building fifty new churches, as also by a parish in the city, St. Mary Woolnoth, in the re-edification of an old one, and has left his mark behind him in several parts of this kingdom.

† James and Kent were mere decorators, and could do little more than design a saloon, a gallery, or a screen. Kent pretended to history-painting, but was, after painting an altar-piece or two, become so conscious of his deficiency, that he strove to render painted stair-cases unfashionable, by dividing them into compartments of stucco, ornamented with groups of fruit and flowers, with other plastic ornaments. He had, nevertheless, a fine taste in gardening, and introduced that style, which now prevails in this kingdom, and serves for a model to all Europe.

‡ Campbell and Gibbs were both men of genius ; the former designed the best house in this kingdom, that at Wansted in Essex, built by the earl of Castlemain ; the latter, St. Martin's church, and other edifices that are an honour to his memory.

not his own, and so far as regards symmetry and correspondence of parts, how little he was qualified to judge of symmetry and the correspondence of parts, whose eye was never capable of comprehending the dome of St. Paul's cathedral, or the towers of Westminster abbey. However, armed as he is above said to have been, with reasons against Mr. Mylne's design, he began an attack on it in a letter to the publisher of the Daily Gazetteer, inserted in that paper for the first day of December 1759, and continued it in the succeeding papers of the eighth and fifteenth of the same month. To one or more of these letters, answers were published, in which it was contended, that at Florence there is a bridge that crosses the river Arno, of an elliptical form, but the argument drawn from thence, Johnson had refuted in his first letter, by observing, that the stability thereof is so much doubted, that carts are not permitted to pass over it, and that it has stood two hundred years without imitation. These, and many other arguments, as also the opinion of that excellent mathematician Mr. Thomas Simpson, were not of sufficient weight with the committee for building the bridge, to recommend the semicircular arch, Mr. Mylne's design was preferred, and the arches are elliptical.

I have already remarked, that Johnson was unskilled in the science of architecture, and I might have added, that he was a stranger to the very rudiments of it. He could not else have failed to notice, in the edifice here spoken of, one of the most egregious errors that ever disgraced a structure of its kind; columns disproportionate in the ratio between
their

their heights and their diameters. The proportion of a column is taken from that of the human figure, which, at a medium, is in a man sesquioctave of the head, and in a woman sesquinonal. The computation of columns by modules or diameters, comes to much the same, and according to Palladio, gives, to one of the Doric order, the masculine proportion of eight of those measures, and, to one of the Ionic, the feminine of nine.

Proportions, thus adjusted by nature, admit of no deviation; whenever that is attempted, deformity ensues, as is to be seen in the instance before us, where we behold a range of Ionic columns, level, it is true, at their bases, but rising from their due proportion at the extremities, in gradation, like the pipes in the front of an organ, to the central arch, where, instead of the proportion of a column; they assume that of a candle*.

It will perhaps be said, that the great elevation of the centre-arch required this preposterous elongation of the columns. To this it may be answered, that proportion is not to be wrested to bye-purposes, and that where beautiful forms cannot be introduced, they must be given up, and ornament yield place to convenience. It is said, that the idea of columns standing on the piers of a bridge was suggested by a design of Piranesi, extant among his works, but

* Columns thus disproportionate, but in a less degree, are also to be seen in the portico of the admiralty-office, designed by Ripley, who, from a carpenter that kept a shop, and also a coffee-house, in Wood street, Cheapside, by marrying a servant of a minister obtained a seat at the Board of Works.

without an assertion that he assumed the licence here reprobated. Should he in any instance be found to have done so, the example of a genius, so wildly magnificent as his, will weigh but little against the practice of Palladio, Scamozzi, Vignola, and, let me add, the earl of Pembroke, the architect of Westminster bridge, who, in all such emergencies as that insisted on, evaded the necessity of violating the rules of their art, by rejecting incongruous decorations, and trusted to the applause they should acquire by uniting levity and convenience with stability.

There are, it must be acknowledged, persons who are as blind to symmetry and the beauty of forms, as others are deaf to the harmony of according sounds, who deny that there are any criteria by which we can discriminate beauty from deformity in one subject, and consonance from dissonance in the other, and who assert that taste is capricious and has no standard, and that fancy is its own arbiter. Let such enjoy their ignorance, while we are engaged in an investigation of the principles into which the pleasures of the eye and ear are resolvable. The result of such an enquiry will be a thorough conviction, that all of what we understand by the terms symmetry and harmony has its foundation in mathematical ratios and proportions, that exist in all the modifications of matter, and are but emanations of that power, which has ordered all things in number, weight and measure*.

* Of these the principal are the equal 1 to 1, the sesquialteral 2 to 3, the sesquitercian 3 to 4, and the duple 1 to 2, answering to the unison, the diapente, the diatessaron, and the diapason, the sweetest concords in music.

I forbear to remark the lesser errors in the construction of this edifice, such as the unwarrantable mutilation of the key-stones over the arches, and the injudicious position of the entablature of the balustrade: those I have pointed out may serve to shew, that the great encouragements given of late to the arts of design, have hitherto failed to call forth a genius in any degree comparable to those of former ages, Jones and Sir Christopher Wren; and that the citizens of London, in the meridian of its glory having, with a view to eternize the memory of a favourite minister, erected an edifice, in which beauty and symmetry are in vain sought for, and called it by his name*, have thereby perpetuated their own disgrace, and subjected a whole nation to the reproach of foreigners.

Neither the writing of his *Rasselas*, nor the event of his mother's death, nor the bridge-controversy, stopped the hand of Johnson, nor interrupted the publication of the *Idler*; but the sale of the *Universal Chronicle*, the vehicle that contained it, was in some degree obstructed by the practices of those literary depredators, who subsist by the labours of others, and whose conduct, with respect to the *Idler*, the following paper, evidently drawn up by Johnson, will explain.

‘ London, January 5, 1759. Advertisement. The
 ‘ proprietors of the paper, entitled ‘ *The Idler*,’ hav-
 ‘ ing found that those essays are inserted in the news-
 ‘ papers and magazines with so little regard to justice
 ‘ or decency, that the *Universal Chronicle*, in which
 ‘ they first appear, is not always mentioned, think it

* It is called Pitt's bridge, and the buildings adjacent to it Chatham place.

‘ necessary

‘ necessary to declare to the publishers of those col-
‘ lections, that however patiently they have hitherto
‘ endured these injuries, made yet more injurious by
‘ contempt, they have now determined to endure
‘ them no longer. They have already seen essays,
‘ for which a very large price is paid, transferred,
‘ with the most shameless rapacity, into the weekly
‘ or monthly compilations, and their right, at least
‘ for the present, alienated from them, before they
‘ could themselves be said to enjoy it. But they
‘ would not willingly be thought to want tenderness,
‘ even for men by whom no tenderness hath been
‘ shewn. The past is without remedy, and shall be
‘ without resentment. But those who have been
‘ thus busy with their sickles in the fields of their
‘ neighbours, are henceforward to take notice, that
‘ the time of impunity is at an end. Whoever shall,
‘ without our leave, lay the hand of rapine upon our
‘ papers, is to expect that we shall vindicate our due,
‘ by the means which justice prescribes, and which are
‘ warranted by the immemorial prescriptions of ho-
‘ nourable trade. We shall lay hold, in our turn, on
‘ their copies, degrade them from the pomp of wide
‘ margin and diffuse typography, contract them into
‘ a narrow space, and sell them at an humble price ;
‘ yet not with a view of growing rich by confiscations,
‘ for we think not much better of money got by pu-
‘ nishment than by crimes ; we shall, therefore, when
‘ our losses are repaid, give what profit shall remain
‘ to the *Magdalens* ; for we know not who can be
‘ more properly taxed for the support of penitent
‘ prostitutes, than prostitutes in whom there yet ap-
‘ pears neither penitence nor shame.’

He

He continued this paper to the extent of one hundred and three numbers, and on Saturday the fifth day of April 1760, closed it with an essay, containing a solemn and very affecting contemplation on the words *this is the last*, in various significations. The concluding paragraph seems to have been written under the pressure of that melancholy, which, almost incessantly afflicted him, heightened, perhaps, by the approach of a season of the year, to Christians the most solemn. The reflections, contained in it, are very serious, and so elegantly expressed, that in the hope that the perusal of it will not prove contagious to the reader, I here give it at length.

‘ As the last Idler is published in that solemn week
 ‘ which the Christian world has always set apart for
 ‘ the examination of the conscience, the review of
 ‘ life, the extinction of earthly desires, and the renovation of holy purposes, I hope that my readers are
 ‘ already disposed to view every incident with seriousness, and improve it by meditation ; and that when
 ‘ they see this series of trifles brought to a conclusion,
 ‘ they will consider that, by outliving the Idler,
 ‘ they have passed weeks, months, and years, which
 ‘ are now no longer in their power ; that an end must
 ‘ in time be put to every thing great as to every thing
 ‘ little ; that to life must come its last hour, and to
 ‘ this system of being, its last day ; the hour at which
 ‘ probation ceases, and repentance will be vain, the
 ‘ day in which every work of the hand, and imagination of the heart, shall be brought to judgment,
 ‘ and an everlasting futurity shall be determined
 ‘ by the past.’

The

The Idler, taken as the title of a series of moral and œconomical essays, is a designation that imports little ; or, rather, its most obvious meaning is a bad one. Johnson was at a loss for a fitter, but he could hit on no one that had not been pre-occupied. He chose an irony, and meant that his readers should understand by it just the reverse of what it signified ; and, in this his intention, he was in little danger of being mistaken, or being charged with idleness by any of those whom he was labouring, by all the powers of reason and eloquence, to make wiser and better.

The plan and conduct of the Idler resembles so nearly that of the Rambler and the Adventurer, that what has been said of each of those publications, might serve for a character of this, saving, that in this latter, admission is given to a greater number of papers, calculated to entertain the mind with pleasing fictions, humorous characters, and varied representations of familiar life, than is to be found in either of the two former, the general effect whereof is, delight, too soon interrupted by their shortness. The second number of the Idler contains an invitation to correspondents, and it had the assistance of other hands ; but I know but of three papers that can with certainty be said to have been written by any other than Johnson himself ; one of the three is No. 67, by Mr. Langton ; the other two, No. 76 and 79, are on the subject of painting, and, in an evening-hour when his pencil was at rest, were composed by Sir Joshua Reynolds. And here let me take notice, that in the publication of the Idler, at least when it was collected into volumes, Johnson and
Newbery

Newbery were joint-adventurers, and that they divided equally the profits arising from the sale thereof.

Of these essays, as also the Rambler, and those in the Adventurer which Johnson wrote, little remains to be remarked, except that, notwithstanding the depth of thinking which they display, and the nervous and elegant style in which they are penned, they were extemporaneous compositions, and hardly ever underwent a revision * before they were sent to the press. The original manuscripts of the Rambler have passed through my hands, and by the perusal of them I am warranted to say, as was said of Shakespeare by the players of his time, that he never blotted out a line; and I believe without the risque of that retort which Ben Jonson made to them, 'Would he had blotted out a thousand.'

Another circumstance, worthy of notice, is, that in the portraits of singular characters, that occur in the papers written by Johnson, the painting is so strong and lively, that some persons, then living, looking on them as resemblances of themselves, actually

- Of his facility in composition, and the rapidity with which he wrote for the press, here follow a few instances: Savage's life, containing a hundred and eighty octavo pages, was the work of thirty-six hours. He was wont to furnish for the Gentleman's Magazine three columns of the debates in an hour, written, as myself can attest, in a character that almost any one might read. His preface to 'The Preceptor,' and his 'Vision of Theodore,' were each the work of one sitting, as was also the first seventy lines of his translation of the tenth satire of Juvenal, entitled, 'The vanity of human Wishes;' and what is almost incredible, he never red his Rasselas but in the proofs which came to him from the press for correction.

charged

charged him with an intention to render them ridiculous, and were hardly appeased by his assurances that he copied no particular subject, but drew from archetypes which his observation had furnished, and his imagination had improved.

Johnson was now become so well known, and had by the Rambler, and other of his writings, given such evidences, not only of great abilities, and of his skill in human life and manners, but of a sociable and benevolent disposition, that many became desirous of his acquaintance, and to this they were farther tempted by the character he had acquired of delighting in conversation, and being free and communicative in his discourse. He had removed, about the beginning of the year 1760, to chambers two doors down the Inner-Temple lane; and I have been told by his neighbour at the corner, that during the time he dwelt there, more enquiries were made at his shop for Mr. Johnson, than for all the inhabitants put together of both the Inner and Middle Temple. This circumstance in his life leads me to mention, that Richardson possessed, but in a less degree, the like powers of attraction, but they operated chiefly on young females, who, being desirous of instruction in the duties of life, were permitted by their parents and friends to visit and receive from him such lessons of prudence as he was ever ready and well qualified to give them; and it is well known, that many ingenious young women, who resorted to his house as to an academy for tuition, became so improved by his conversation and his extemporary commentaries on his own writings, as afterwards to make a considerable figure in

in the literary world*. And here let me observe, that the benefits of oral instruction, joined with the perusal of such authors as we now put into female hands, may be estimated by the degree of mental improvement at which the sex is at this day arrived, which, as Johnson once remarked to me on receiving a lady's letter, is so great, that in that kind of composition, we who were their teachers, may learn of them.

From this propensity to discursive communication, in which Johnson and Richardson resembled each other, nothing more is to be understood, than that both took pleasure in that interchange of sentiments and opinions, which renders conversation instructive and delightful, for, in other respects, they were men of very different endowments and tempers. Richardson being bred to a mechanic occupation, had no learning, nor more reading than was sufficient to enable him to form a style easy and intelligible, and a little raised above that of vulgar narrative. His sentiments were his own, and of this he was so sensible, and also of the originality and importance of many of them, that he would ever be talking of his writings, and the words sentiment and sentimentality became, not only a part of the cant of his school, but were adopted by succeeding writers, and have been used to recommend to some readers sentimental journies, sentimental letters, sentimental sermons, and a world of trash,

* See a poem in Fawkes and Woty's 'Poetical calendar,' intitled 'The Femininead,' written by the Rev. Mr. Duncombe, late of Canterbury, deceased.

which,

which, but for this silly epithet, would never have attracted notice.

Richardson's conversation was of the preceptive kind, but it wanted the diversity of Johnson's, and had no intermixture of wit or humour. Richardson could never relate a pleasant story, and hardly relish one told by another: he was ever thinking of his own writings, and listening to the praises which, with an emulous profusion, his friends were incessantly bestowing on them, he would scarce enter into free conversation with any one that he thought had not read 'Clarissa,' or 'Sir Charles Grandison,' and at best, he could not be said to be a companionable man*.

Those who were unacquainted with Richardson, and had read his books, were led to believe, that they exhibited a picture of his own mind, and that his temper and domestic behaviour could not but correspond with that refined morality which they inculcate, but in this they were deceived. He was austere in the government of his family, and issued his orders to some of his servants in writing only. His nearest female relations, in the presence of strangers, were mutes, and

* I once travelled with him in the Fulham stage-coach, in which, at my getting in, I found him seated. I learned, by somewhat he said to the coachman, who he was, and made some essays towards conversation, but he seemed disinclined to any. There was one other passenger, who being a female, I was, in common civility, bound to take notice of; but my male companion I left to indulge himself in a reverie, which neither he nor I interrupted by the utterance of a single word, and lasted till he was set down at his house on Parson's green. He had the courtesy to ask us in, but as our acquaintance had but lately commenced, and had received but little improvement in our journey, the civility was declined.

seemed

seemed to me, in a visit I once made him, to have been disciplined in the school of Ben Jonson's Morose, whose injunction to his servant was, 'Answer me not but with your leg.' In short, they appeared to have been taught to converse with him by signs; and it was too plain to me, that on his part, the most frequent of them were frowns and gesticulations, importing that they should leave his presence. I have heard it said, that he was what is called a nervous man; and how far nervosity, with so good an understanding as he is allowed to have possessed, will excuse a conduct so opposite to that philanthropy which he laboured to inculcate, I cannot say: his benevolence might have taken another direction, and in other instances be very strong; for I was once a witness to his putting into the hand of Mr. Whiston the book-feller, ten guineas for the relief of one whom a sudden accident had made a widow.

Johnson's mind was never occupied on trifles: his speculations were grand and noble, his reading various and extensive, and, on some subjects, profound. As he professed always to speak in the best and most correct phrase, rejecting all such common and vulgar combinations of speech as are in use only till others equally affected and insignificant are invented, his conversation-style bore a great resemblance to that of his writings, so that, in his common discourse, he might seem to incur the censure which bishop Burnet casts on the lord chancellor Nottingham, of being too eloquent; but so far were his hearers from thinking so, that many wished for the power of retaining as well the colloquial form as the substance of his conversa-

tions; and some there were, who to that end, in imitation of the Colloquia Mensalia of Luther, and the Table-talk of Selden, not to say of the books in *ana**, as they are called, made common-places of his sayings, his precepts, and his apophthegms; but the want of judgment in the selection of them, has rendered most of the collections of this kind, that I have ever seen, of little worth.

Gesticular mimicry and buffoonery he hated, and would often huff Garrick for exercising it in his presence; but of the talent of humour he had an almost enviable portion. To describe the nature of this faculty, as he was wont to display it in his hours of mirth and relaxation, I must say, that it was ever of that arch and dry kind, which lies concealed under the appearance of gravity, and which acquiesces in an error for the purpose of refuting it. Thus, in the Rambler, No. 1, he tells his readers, very gravely, that it is one among many reasons for which he purposes to entertain his countrymen, that he hopes not much to tire those whom he shall not happen to please, and if he is not commended for the beauty of his works, to be at least pardoned for their brevity. ‘But whether,’ adds he, ‘my expectations are most fixed on pardon or praise, I think it not necessary to discover.’—And in the Idler, No. 3, he suggests consolation against the dread of an imaginary evil founded on false philosophy, by admitting, that

* These are the Menagiana, Parrhasiana, Huetiana, Scaligeriana, Naudæana, Patiniana, Poggiana, Thuana, Perroniana, Pithæana, Colomesiana, Sorberiana, Valesiana, and others less known.

though

though certain, it is remote. The passage would be injured by contraction, and I therefore give it at length.

‘ Many philosophers imagine, that the elements themselves may in time be exhausted; that the sun, by shining long, will effuse all its light; and that by the continual waste of aqueous particles, the whole earth will at last become a sandy desert.

‘ I would not advise my readers to disturb themselves by contriving how they shall live without light and water; for the days of universal thirst and perpetual darkness are at a great distance. The ocean and the sun will last our time, and we may leave posterity to shift for themselves.

‘ But if the stores of nature are limited, much more narrow bounds must be set to the modes of life; and mankind may want a moral or amusing paper many years before they shall be deprived of drink or day-light. This want, which to the busy and inventive may seem easily remediable by some substitute or other, the whole race of idlers will feel with all the sensibility that all such torpid animals can suffer.’

A friend of his used often to visit him, who, though a man of learning and great good sense, had a style of conversing so peculiarly eloquent and verbose, as to be sometimes unintelligible: Johnson had a mind one day to give me a specimen of it, and assuming his manner, he, in a connected speech on a familiar subject, uttered a succession of sentences, in language resembling the style of metaphysics, but, though fluent, so obscured by parentheses and other involu-

tions, that I was unable to collect from it a single idea. After he had for five minutes continued this gibberish, he said, ‘ This is the manner in which
‘ * * * * entertains me whenever he comes here.’

In the same vein of humour he once ridiculed Hervey’s Meditations on a Flower-garden and other subjects, in the following extemporaneous reflections on a pudding :

‘ Let us seriously reflect on what a pudding
‘ is composed of. It is composed of flour that
‘ once waved in the golden grain, and drank the
‘ dews of the morning—of milk pressed from the
‘ swelling udder by the gentle hand of the beautiful milk-maid, whose beauty and innocence
‘ might have recommended a worse draught ; who,
‘ whilst she stroked the udder, indulged no ambitious
‘ thoughts of dwelling in palaces, and formed no
‘ schemes for the destruction of her fellow-creatures—milk which is drawn from the cow, that
‘ useful animal, that eats the grass of the field, and
‘ supplies us with that which made the greatest part
‘ of the food of that age, which the poets have agreed
‘ to call golden.

‘ It is made with an egg, that miracle of nature,
‘ which the theoretical Burnet has compared to creation—an egg that contains water within its beautiful smooth surface, and an unformed mass which,
‘ by the incubation of the parent, becomes a regular
‘ animal, furnished with bones and sinews, and covered with feathers.

‘ Let us consider—can there be any thing wanting
‘ to complete this meditation on a pudding—if more
‘ is

‘ is wanting, more may be found. It contains salt,
 ‘ which preserves the sea from putrefaction; salt,
 ‘ which is made the image of intellectual excellence,
 ‘ contributes to the formation of a pudding.’

He excelled also in the talent of burlesque versification, and, upon occasion of a discourse at Sir Joshua Reynolds’s on Dr. Percy’s ‘ Reliques of ancient English poetry,’ in which the beautiful simplicity of many of the ballads therein contained was remarked with some exaggeration, Johnson contended, that what was called simplicity was, in truth, inanity; and, to illustrate his argument, and ridicule that kind of poetry, uttered the following impromptu :

‘ As with my hat upon my head,
 ‘ I walk’d along the Strand,
 ‘ I there did meet another man,
 ‘ With his hat in his hand.’

And it being at a tea-conversation, he, addressing himself to Miss Reynolds, went on rhyming thus,

‘ I pray thee, gentle Renny dear,
 ‘ That thou wilt give to me,
 ‘ With cream and sugar temper’d well,
 ‘ Another dish of tea,
 ‘ Nor fear that I, my gentle maid,
 ‘ Shall long detain the cup,
 ‘ When once unto the bottom I
 ‘ Have drank the liquor up.

‘ Yet hear, at last, this mournful truth,
 ‘ Nor hear it with a frown,
 ‘ Thou can’st not make the tea so fast,
 ‘ As I can gulp it down.’

With these powers of instructing and delighting those with whom he conversed, it is no wonder that the acquaintance of Johnson was sought by many; and I will not say, either that he set so great a value on his time, as not to be accessible to all who wished for the pleasure of it, or that his vanity was not gratified by the visits of bishops, of courtiers, senators, scholars, travellers, and women.

In his conversation with the last in this enumeration, he had such a felicity as would put vulgar gallantry out of countenance. Of the female mind, he conceived a higher opinion than many men, and though he was never suspected of a blameable intimacy with any individual of them, had a great esteem for the sex. The defect in his powers of sight rendered him totally insensible to the charms of beauty; but he knew that beauty was the attribute of the sex, and treated all women with such an equable complacency, as flattered every one into a belief, that she had her share of that or some more valuable endowment. In his discourses with them, his compliments had ever a neat and elegant turn: they were never direct, but always implied the merit they were intended to attest.

In this enjoyment of himself and his friends, his engagements to the public were forgotten: his critical talents lay dormant, and not any, nor all of those who

who wished to see his Shakespeare, could rouse his attention to the prosecution of that work; yet was he ready, at the call of almost any one, to assist, either by correction, or by a preface, or dedication, in the publication of works not his own. Dr. Madden, so well-known by his premiums for the encouragement of Protestant working-schools in Ireland, and other instances of beneficence in favour of that country, in the year 1745 published a panegyrical poem on archbishop Boulter; some years after, being minded to re-publish it, he submitted it to Johnson's correction, and I found among his books a copy of the poem, with a note, in a spare leaf thereof, purporting, that the author had made him a visit, and, for a very few remarks and alterations of it, had presented him with ten guineas. Such casual emoluments as these Johnson frequently derived from his profession of an author. For the dedication to his present majesty, of Adams's book on the use of the globes, he was, as himself informed me, gratified with a present of a very curious meteorological instrument, of a new and ingenious construction.

About this time, as it is supposed, he, for sundry beneficed clergymen that requested him, composed pulpit discourses*, and for these, he made no scruple of confessing, he was paid: his price, I am informed, was a moderate one, a guinea; and such was his no-
tion

* The practice of preaching sermons composed by others is now become so common, that many of the clergy scruple not to avow it, and think themselves justified by the authority of Mr. Addison, who in one of his Spectators has very incautiously given countenance thereto, and put into the mouths not only of such clergymen as are *minus idonei*, but of such as, contrary to their

tion of justice, that having been paid, he considered them so absolutely the property of the purchaser, as to renounce all claim to them. He reckoned that he had written about forty sermons; but, except as to some, knew not in what hands they were—‘I have,’ said he, ‘been paid for them, and have no right to enquire about them*.’

I have now brought him to the year 1760, the fifty-first of his age. He had nothing to depend on for subsistence but the labour of his brain; and that apprehension, touching the duration of his rational powers, which throughout his life haunted him, increased the terrors of approaching age. The accession of our present gracious sovereign to the throne, and the bounty exercised by him towards Johnson, dispelled this gloomy prospect, and placed him in such a state of affluence as

engagement at their ordination, instead of being *diligent in*, are negligent of, *such studies as help to the knowledge of the scriptures*, a perpetual apology for ignorance and idleness; for, as long as they chuse to say there are better discourses extant, or to be procured, than they are able to make, the excuse will hold them; and accordingly many are not ashamed to claim the benefit of it, who have nothing to plead but what is an aggravation of their neglect; to which it may be added, that as it is an assumption of the merit of another, the practice is unjust, and, as its leads to a belief of that which is not true, in a high degree immoral.

* Myself have heard, in the church of St. Margaret Westminster, sundry sermons, which I and many others judged, by the sentiments, style, and method, to be of his composition; one in particular, Johnson being present. The next visit I made him, I told him that I had seen him at St. Margaret’s on the preceding Sunday, and that it was he who then preached. He heard me, and did not deny either assertion, which, if either had not been true, he certainly would have done. In his diary I find the following note: ‘77, Sept. 21. Concio pro Taylors.’

his

his utmost industry would hardly ever have enabled him to arrive at. Lord Bute was the minister at the time; and the person employed to notify to Johnson his majesty's intention to reward him for his literary labours with a pension of 300l. a year, was his friend Mr. Murphy. Upon receiving the news, Johnson was in doubt what answer to return, being, perhaps, disturbed with the reflection, that whatever he might deserve from the public, he had very little claim to the favour of any of the descendants of the house of Hanover; and desired that Mr. Murphy would give him till next day to deliberate upon a message so unexpected. At the end thereof he signified his willingness to accept it.

It was by Johnson and his friends thought fit, that he should return thanks for this distinguishing mark of the royal favour, and that lord Bute, who may be supposed to have been instrumental in procuring it, was the proper person to convey them. Accordingly, he waited on his lordship for the purpose, and, being admitted to him, testified his sense of the obligation; but having done this, he thought he had done enough, and never after could be prevailed on to knock at his door.

He had now suffered himself to be enrolled in the list of pensioners, and was become obnoxious to the censures of those, who, looking upon a perpetual enmity to government and its ministers as a proof of public virtue, endeavoured to have it believed, that all favours dispensed by the crown, even when meant as the rewards of merit, or the encouragement of learning, of ingenuity, or industry, were but the wages

wages of iniquity. Johnson, it is true, had laid himself open to reproach, by his interpretation of the word Pension in his dictionary, written, it is evident, at a time when his political prejudices were strongest, and he found himself in a predicament similar to that of Dr. Sherlock, who, at the revolution, was a non-juror to king William, but, after deliberating on his refusal as a case of conscience, took the side that made for his interest, but against his reputation. But who, except the Great Searcher of Hearts, can know, that in the case of Sherlock or Johnson, either made a sacrifice of his conscience? Or, seeing that the grant of Johnson's pension was confessedly unconditional, and bound him neither to the renunciation of any of his political principles, nor the exercise of his pen in the defence of any set of men or series of measures, who will have the face to say, that his acceptance of it was criminal, or that it was in the power of any one to pervert the integrity of a man, who, in the time of his necessity, had, from scruples of his own raising, declined the offer of a valuable ecclesiastical preferment, and thereby renounced an independent provision for the whole of his life?

It is yet difficult, if not impossible, to justify Johnson, both in the interpretation given by him of the word Pension, and in his becoming a pensioner: in one instance or the other he was wrong, and either his discretion or integrity must be given up: in the former, he seems, in some of his actions, to have been wanting, in the latter never: not only charity, but reason, therefore, directs us in the opinion we are to form of an act which has drawn censure on his conduct,

duct, and proves nothing more than that he was not equally wise at all times*.

The addition of three hundred pounds a year, to what Johnson was able to earn by the ordinary exercise of his talents, raised him to a state of comparative affluence, and afforded him the means of assisting many whose real or pretended wants had formerly excited his compassion. He now practised a rule which he often recommended to his friends, always to go abroad with a quantity of loose money to give to beggars, imitating therein, though I am confident without intending it, that good but weak man, old Mr. Whiston, whom I have seen distributing, in the streets of London, money to beggars on each hand of him, till his pocket was nearly exhausted.

He had, early in his life, been a dabbler in physic, and laboured under some secret bodily infirmities that gave him occasion once to say to me, that he knew not what it was to be totally free from pain. He now drew into a closer intimacy with him a man, with whom he had been acquainted from the year 1746, one of the lowest practitioners in the art of

* Some of Johnson's friends, and all his enemies, would have been glad had he imitated the conduct of Andrew Marvell, who, in the reign of Cha. II. upon the offer of any post under the government that would please him, and of a thousand pounds in money, made him in a message from the king by the earl of Danby at a time when he wanted a guinea, refused both. But Johnson had no reason to practice such self-denial. Marvell, to be grateful, must have deserted his principles, and acquiesced in the measures of a corrupt court. Johnson, on the contrary, was in no danger, during such a reign as is the present, of being required to make a sacrifice of his conscience, and, being thus at liberty, he accepted the bounty of his sovereign.

healing

healing that ever sought a livelihood by it: him he consulted in all that related to his health, and made so necessary to him as hardly to be able to live without him.

The name of this person was Robert Levett. An account of him is given in the Gentleman's Magazine for February 1785: an earlier than that, I have now lying before me, in a letter from a person in the country to Johnson, written in answer to one in which he had desired to be informed of some particulars respecting his friend Levett, then lately deceased. The substance of this information is as follows:

He was born at Kirk Ella, a parish about five miles distant from Hull, and lived with his parents till about twenty years of age. He had acquired some knowledge of the Latin language, and had a propensity to learning, which his parents not being able to gratify, he went to live as a shopman with a woollen-draper at Hull: with him he stayed two years, during which time he learned from a neighbour of his master somewhat of the practice of physic: at the end thereof he came to London, with a view possibly to improve himself in that profession; but by some strange accident was led to pursue another course, and became steward or some other upper servant to the then lord Cardigan, [or Cadogan] and having saved some money, he took a resolution to travel, and visited France and Italy for the purpose, as his letters mention, of gaining experience in physic, and, returning to London with a valuable library which he had collected abroad, placed one of his brothers apprentice to a mathematical-instrument maker, and provided for the education of another. After this he went to Paris,
and

and, for improvement, attended the hospitals in that city. At the end of five years he returned to England, and taking lodgings in the house of an attorney in Northumberland court, near Charing cross, he became a practicer of physic. The letter adds, that he was about seventy-eight at the time of his death.

The account of Levett in the Gentleman's Magazine is anonymous; I nevertheless insert it verbatim, together with a letter of Johnson's to Dr. Lawrence notifying his death.

‘ Mr. Levett, though an Englishman by birth, became early in life a waiter at a coffee-house in Paris. The surgeons who frequented it, finding him of an inquisitive turn, and attentive to their conversation, made a purse for him, and gave him some instructions in their art. They afterwards furnished him with the means of other knowledge, by procuring him free admission to such lectures in pharmacy and anatomy as were read by the ablest professors of that period. Hence his introduction to a business, which afforded him a continual, though slender maintenance. Where the middle part of his life was spent, is uncertain. He resided, however, above twenty years under the roof of Johnson, who never wished him to be regarded as an inferior, or treated him like a dependent*. He breakfasted with the doctor every morning, and perhaps was seen no more by him till mid-night. Much of the day was employed in attendance on his patients, who were

* Dr. Johnson has frequently observed, that Levett was indebted to him for nothing more than house-room, his share in a penny loaf at breakfast, and now and then a dinner on a Sunday.

‘ chiefly

‘ chiefly of the lowest rank of tradesmen. The re-
‘ mainder of his hours he dedicated to Hunter’s
‘ lectures, and to as many different opportunities of
‘ improvement as he could meet with on the same
‘ gratuitous conditions. “ All his medical know-
‘ ledge,” said Johnson, “ and it is not inconsiderable*,
‘ was obtained through the ear. Though he buys
‘ books, he seldom looks into them, or discovers any
‘ power by which he can be supposed to judge of an
‘ author’s merit.”

‘ Before he became a constant inmate of the doctor’s
‘ house, he married, when he was near sixty, a woman
‘ of the town, who had persuaded him (notwithstand-
‘ ing their place of congress was a small-coal shed in
‘ Fetter lane) that she was nearly related to a man of
‘ fortune, but was injuriously kept by him out of
‘ large possessions. It is almost needless to add, that
‘ both parties were disappointed in their views. If
‘ Levett took her for an heiress, who in time might
‘ be rich, she regarded him as a physician already in
‘ considerable practice.—Compared with the marvels
‘ of this transaction, as Johnson himself declared
‘ when relating them, the tales in the Arabian
‘ Nights’ Entertainments seem familiar occurrences.
‘ Never was infant more completely duped than our
‘ hero. He had not been married four months, be-
‘ fore a writ was taken out against him, for debts in-
‘ curred by his wife.—He was sequestered, and his
‘ friend then procured him a protection from a foreign
‘ minister. In a short time afterwards, she ran away

* He had acted for many years in the capacity of surgeon and apothecary to Johnson, under the direction of Dr. Lawrence.

' from him, and was tried, providentially, in his opi-
 ' nion, for picking pockets at the Old Bailey. Her
 ' husband was, with difficulty, prevented from attend-
 ' ing the court, in the hope she would be hanged. She
 ' pleaded her own cause, and was acquitted; a separa-
 ' tion between this ill-starred couple took place; and
 ' Dr. Johnson then took Levett home, where he con-
 ' tinued till his death, which happened suddenly, with-
 ' out pain, Jan. 17, 1782. His vanity in supposing,
 ' that a young woman of family and fortune should be
 ' enamoured of him, Dr. Johnson thought, deserved
 ' some check.—As no relations of his were known to
 ' Dr. Johnson, he advertised for them. In the course
 ' of a few weeks an heir at law appeared, and ascer-
 ' tained his title to what effects the deceased had left
 ' behind him.

' Levett's character was rendered valuable by re-
 ' peated proof of honesty, tenderness, and gratitude to
 ' his benefactor, as well as by an unwearied diligence
 ' in his profession.—His single failing was, an occasi-
 ' onal departure from sobriety. Johnson would ob-
 ' serve, he was, perhaps, the only man who ever be-
 ' came intoxicated through motives of prudence.
 ' He reflected, that if he refused the gin or brandy
 ' offered him by some of his patients, he could have
 ' been no gainer by their cure, as they might have
 ' had nothing else to bestow on him. This habit of
 ' taking a fee, in whatever shape it was exhibited,
 ' could not be put off by advice or admonition of
 ' any kind. He would swallow what he did not
 ' like, nay, what he knew would injure him, rather
 ' than go home with an idea, that his skill had
 ' been exerted without recompence. " Had (said
 ' Johnson)

“ Johnson) all his patients maliciously combined
 “ to reward him with meat and strong liquors instead
 “ of money, he would either have burst, like the
 “ dragon in the Apocrypha, through repletion, or
 “ been scorched up, like Portia, by swallowing fire.”

‘ But let not from hence an imputation of rapaciousness
 ‘ be fixed upon him. Though he took all that was
 ‘ offered him, he demanded nothing from the poor,
 ‘ nor was known in any instance to have enforced the
 ‘ payment of even what was justly his due.

‘ His person was middle-sized and thin; his visage
 ‘ swarthy, adust and corrugated. His conversation,
 ‘ except on professional subjects, barren. When in
 ‘ deshabille, he might have been mistaken for an
 ‘ alchemist, whose complexion had been hurt by the
 ‘ fumes of the crucible, and whose clothes had suffer-
 ‘ ed from the sparks of the furnace.

‘ Such was Levett, whose whimsical frailty, if
 ‘ weighed against his good and useful qualities,
 ‘ was

“ A floating atom, dust that falls unheeded

“ Into the adverse scale, nor shakes the balance.”

IRENE.

To this character I here add as a supplement to it, a dictum of Johnson respecting Levett, viz. that his external appearance and behaviour were such, that he disgusted the rich, and terrified the poor.

But notwithstanding all these offensive particulars, Johnson, whose credulity in some instances was as great as his incredulity in others, conceived of him as of a skilful medical professor, and thought himself
 happy

happy in having so near his person one who was to him, not solely a physician, a surgeon, or an apothecary, but all. In extraordinary cases he, however, availed himself of the assistance of his valued friend Dr. Lawrence, a man of whom, in respect of his piety, learning, and skill in his profession, it may almost be said, the world was not worthy, inasmuch as it suffered his talents, for the whole of his life, to remain, in a great measure, unemployed, and himself to end his days in sorrow and obscurity.

Of this person, with whom I was for many years acquainted, but who is now no more, gratitude for the benefits which myself and one most dear to me have derived from his skill and attention, obliges me to speak with reverence and respect. He was a native of Hampshire, and having ended his studies at Oxford, came to London about the year 1737, at which time Dr. Frank Nicholls had attained great reputation for skill in anatomy. To complete them, he became a pupil of his, in that branch of medical science, and upon Nicholls's discontinuing to read lectures therein, which he had for several years done with great applause, Dr. Lawrence took them up, and had many hearers, till Hunter, a surgeon, arrived from Scotland, who, settling in London, became his rival in the same practice, and having the advantage of Dr. Lawrence, in his manner of enunciating, together with the assistance and support of all his countrymen in this kingdom, and moreover, being a man whose skill in his art was equal to his pretensions, he became a favourite with the leading men in the practice of physic, and in a few winters drew to him such a resort of pupils, as in-

duced Dr. Lawrence to give up lecturing, and betake himself to the general exercise of his profession.

In his endeavours to attain to eminence, it was his misfortune to fail : he was above those arts by which popularity is acquired, and had besides some personal defects and habits which stood in his way ; a vacuity of countenance very unfavourable to an opinion of his learning or sagacity, and certain convulsive motions of the head and features that gave pain to the beholders, and drew off attention to all that he said *.

He delighted much in naval architecture, and was able with his own hands, and a variety of tools of his own contrivance, to form a model of a ship of war of any rate ; first framing it with ribs and such other timbers as are requisite in a ship for service, and afterwards covering it with planks of the thickness of a half-crown piece, and the breadth of about an inch, which he fastened to the ribs with wooden pins of a proportionable size, and in this manner of working he completed many such models, elegantly wrought and most beautiful in their forms. He was also a lover of music, and was able to play his part in concert on the violoncello † till hindered by deafness, a disorder that

* It will hardly be believed, how much such particularities as these, obstruct the progress of one who is to make his way in a profession : a stammering, or a bad articulation, spoil an orator, and a disgusting appearance hurts a physician. Pemberton, the Gresham professor, a great man in his time, was consigned to indigence, by a habit of distorting the muscles of his face, which was become irresistible.

† He had a younger brother named Charles, a solicitor of great practice, who also played on the violoncello, and, having been a pupil

that came upon him about the middle of his life, and at length drove him to seek a retreat from the world and all its cares at Canterbury, where, about the year 1783, he died. To console him under some family disappointments, Johnson addressed to him a fine Latin ode, which is inserted in his works.

He wrote the life of his friend Dr. Nicholls, in very elegant Latin, but it was never published: his sole design in printing it being to gratify those of his own profession. In the same language, he wrote the life of Dr. William Harvey, prefixed to an edition of his works, published by the college of physicians in 1766, in one volume 4to.

The sincere and lasting friendship, that subsisted between Johnson and Levett, may serve to shew, that although a similarity of dispositions and qualities has a tendency to beget affection, or something very nearly resembling it, it may be contracted and subsist where this inducement is wanting; for hardly were ever two men less like each other, in this respect, than were they. Levett had not an understanding capable of comprehending the talents of Johnson: the mind of Johnson was therefore, as to him, a blank; and Johnson, had the eye of his mind been more penetrating than it

pupil on that instrument, of Caporale, was the best performer on it of any gentleman in England. About the year 1740, I was used to meet both the brothers at a tavern in Gracechurch street, where was a private concert, to which none but such as could join in it were admitted. Many of those who frequented it were great masters, namely, Mr. Stanley, who played the first violin, the above Sig. Caporale, Vincent, the hautboy player, and Balcourt, who performed on the German flute: the rest were organists and gentlemen performers.

was, could not discern, what did not exist, any particulars in Levett's character that at all resembled his own. He had no learning, and consequently was an unfit companion for a learned man; and though it may be said, that having lived some years abroad, he must have seen and remarked many things that would have afforded entertainment in the relation, this advantage was counterbalanced by an utter inability for continued conversation, taciturnity being one of the most obvious features in his character: the consideration of all which particulars almost impels me to say, that Levett admired Johnson because others admired him, and that Johnson in pity loved Levett, because few others could find any thing in him to love.

And here I cannot forbear remarking, that, almost throughout his life, poverty and distressed circumstances seemed to be the strongest of all recommendations to his favour. When asked by one of his most intimate friends, how he could bear to be surrounded by such necessitous and undeserving people as he had about him, his answer was, 'If I did not assist them no one else would, and they must be lost for want.' Among many others, whom he thus patronized, was a worthless fellow, a dancing-master by profession, and an assistant in teaching to the famous Noverre the favourite of Mr. Garrick. This man, notwithstanding the nature of his employment, which was a genteel one, and led to no such connections, delighted in the company and conversation of marshal's-court attornies, and of bailiffs and their followers, and others of a lower class, sharpers and swindlers, who, when they had made him

him

him drunk, would get him to sign notes and engagements of various kinds, which, he not being able to discharge, they had him arrested upon, and this was so frequently the case, that much of his time was passed in confinement. His wife, through Mrs. Williams, got at Johnson, and told him her tale, which was, that her husband was, at that instant, detained for a small debt in a spunging-house, and he conceiving it to be a piteous one, and an additional proof that in human life the evil accidents outnumber the good, sent her to me for advice. I heard her story, and learned from it, that all the merit of the fellow lay in his heels, that he had neither principle nor discretion, and, in short, was a cully, the dupe of every one that would make him drunk. I therefore dismissed her with a message to Johnson to this effect: that her husband made it impossible for his friends to help him, and must submit to his destiny. When I next saw Johnson, I told him that there seemed to be as exact a fitness between the character of this man and his associates, as is between the web of a spider and the wings of a fly, and I could not but think he was born to be cheated. Johnson seemed to acquiesce in my opinion; but I believe, before that, had set him at liberty by paying the debt.

Another of Johnson's distressed friends was, Mr. Edmund Southwell, a younger brother of Thomas lord Southwell, of the kingdom of Ireland. This gentleman, having no patrimony, was, in his younger days, a cornet of horse; but having in a duel, into which he was forced, slain his antagonist, he quitted the service, and trusted to Providence for a support.

He was a man of wonderful parts, of lively and entertaining conversation, and well acquainted with the world; he was also a brother in affliction with Johnson, that is to say, he laboured under a depression of mind, occasioned by the misadventure above-mentioned, that often approached to insanity. Being without employment, his practice was to wander about the streets of London, and call in at such coffee-houses, for instance, the Smyrna and Cocoa-tree in Pall-Mall, and Child's and Batson's in the city, as were frequented by men of intelligence, or where any thing like conversation was going forward: in these he found means to make friends, from whom he derived a precarious support. In the city he was so well known, and so much beloved and pitied, that many, by private donations, relieved his wants. In particular, Sir Robert Ladbroke, an alderman thereof, and a man of opulence, made him frequent presents of money to supply his necessities, and Mr. Bates, the master of the Queen's-arms tavern in St. Paul's church-yard, suffered him, as often as he pleased, to add to an ideal account subsisting between them, the expence of a dinner. A gentleman of great worth in the city, who knew and pitied his distresses, procured, unknown to him, from a lady famous for her beneficence, a pension of a hundred pounds a year, which he lived but few years to receive.

Johnson was a great lover of penitents, and of all such men as, in their conversation, made professions of piety; of this man he would say, that he was one of the most pious of all his acquaintance, but in this, as he frequently was in the judgment he formed of others,

others, he was mistaken. It is possible that Southwell might, in his conversation, express such sentiments of religion and moral obligation, as served to shew that he was not an infidel, but he seldom went sober to bed, and as seldom rose from it before noon.

He was also an admirer of such as he thought well-bred men. What was his notion of good breeding I could never learn. If it was not courtesy and affability, it could to him be nothing; for he was an incompetent judge of graceful attitudes and motions, and of the ritual of behaviour. Of lord Southwell, the brother of the above person, and of Tom Hervey, a profligate, worthless man, the author of the letter to Sir Thomas Hanmer, and who had nothing in his external appearance that could in the least recommend him, he was used to say, they were each of them a model for the first man of quality in the kingdom. In this method of estimating behaviour, he seemed to think that good-breeding is a faculty, which, like fencing, dancing, and other bodily exercises, must be learned before they can be practised; whereas, it is obvious, that this quality is nothing more than artificial benevolence, and that that politeness, which it is the employment of the instructors of youth to teach, is but a substitute for those dispositions of mind, which, whoever possesses, and takes care to cultivate, will have very little need of foreign assistance in the forming of his manners.

He once mentioned to me a saying of Dr. Nicholls, and highly commended it, viz. that it

was a point of wisdom to form intimacies, and to choose for our friends only persons of known worth and integrity, and that to do so had been the rule of his life. It is, therefore, difficult to account for the conduct of Johnson in the choice of many of his associates, and particularly of those who, when his circumstances became easy, he suffered to intrude on him. Of these he had some at bed and board, who had elbowed through the world, and subsisted by lying, begging, and shifting, all which he knew, but seemed to think never the worse of them. In his endeavours to promote the interests of people of this class, he, in some instances, went such lengths as were hardly consistent with that integrity, which he manifested on all other occasions ; for he would frequently, by letters, recommend those to credit, who could obtain it by no other means, and thereby enabled them to contract debts, which he had good reason to suspect, they neither could nor ever would pay.

These connections exposed him to trouble and incessant solicitation, which he bore well enough, but his inmates were enemies to his peace, and occasioned him great disquiet : the jealousy that subsisted among them rendered his dwelling irksome to him, and he seldom approached it, after an evening's conversation abroad, but with the dread of finding it a scene of discord, and of having his ears filled with the complaints of Mrs. Williams of Frank's neglect of his duty and inattention to the interests of his master, and of Frank against Mrs. Williams, for the authority she assumed over him, and exercised with an unwarrantable severity. Even those intruders who had
taken

taken shelter under his roof, and who, in his absence from home, brought thither their children, found cause to murmur; their provision of food was scanty, or their dinners ill dressed; all which he chose to endure rather than put an end to their clamours, by ridding his house of such thankless and troublesome guests. Nay, so insensible was he of the ingratitude of those whom he suffered thus to hang on him, and among whom he may be said to have divided an income which was little more than sufficient for his own support, that he would submit to reproach and personal affront from some of them, even Levett would sometimes insult him, and Mrs. Williams, in her paroxysms of rage, has been known to drive him from her presence.

Who, that reflects on Johnson's pusillanimity in these instances, can reconcile it to that spirit which prompted him, or with those endowments which enabled him to maintain a superiority over all with whom he conversed? or to that seeming ferocity of temper that gave occasion to some to consider him as an animal not to be approached without terror? or account for the inconsistency above-noted, otherwise than by resolving it into those principles that dictated patience, under all the provocations of a female tongue, to Socrates? In truth, there was more asperity in his manner of expression than in his natural disposition; for I have heard that, in many instances, and in some with tears in his eyes, he has apologized to those whom he had offended by contradiction or roughness of behaviour.

To this inconsistency of character it must be imputed, that he failed to attract reverence and respect
from

from those who lived in greatest intimacy with him. There was wanting in his conduct and behaviour that dignity, which results from a regular and orderly course of action, and, by an irresistible power, commands esteem. He could not be said to be a stayed man, nor so to have adjusted in his mind the balance of reason and passion, as to give occasion to say what may be observed of some men, that all they do is just, fit, and right: and although he was strict, and even punctilious, in the practice of the great duties of morality, he trusted but little to his domestic conduct, to his method of employing his time, and governing his family, for the good opinion he wished the world to entertain of him, but, in these particulars, gave way to the love of ease, and to self-indulgence, little regarding, in his own practice, those counsels of prudence, those œconomical maxims, and those reflections on the shortness of human life, with which his writings abound. To a lady, who signified a great desire to increase her acquaintance with authors, conceiving that more might be learned from their conversation and manner of living, than from their works—‘Madam,’ said he, ‘the best part of an author will always be found in his writings.’—And to a person, who once said he paid little regard to those writers on religion or morality, whose practice corresponded not with their precepts, he imputed a want of knowledge of mankind, saying, it was gross ignorance in him not to know, that good principles and an irregular life were consistent with each other.

This was a secret which, without much mischief, might have been revealed in conversation, but John-
son

son has thought fit to send it abroad in the fourteenth number of the Rambler, with this apology:

‘ We are not to wonder that most fail, amidst tumult, and snares, and dangers, in the observance of those precepts which they lay down in solitude, safety, and tranquillity, with a mind unbiaſſed, and with liberty unobſtructed. It is the condition of our preſent ſtate to ſee more than we can attain; the exacteſt vigilance and caution can never maintain a ſingle day of innocence, much leſs can the utmoſt efforts of incorporated mind reach the ſummits of ſpeculative virtue.’

He farther ſays, ‘ It is recorded of Sir Mathew Hale that he, for a long time, concealed the conſecration of himſelf to the ſtricter duties of religion, leſt, by ſome flagitious and ſhameful action, he ſhould bring piety into diſgrace *;’ and upon this his conduct he ſuggeſts, that ‘ it may be prudent for a writer, who apprehends that he ſhall not enforce his own maxims by his domeſtic character, to conceal his name that he may not injure them.’

In

* This kind of timidity ſurely ſtands in need of ſome excuſe; for what would become of the world were all religious men ſubjected by the ſame fear? or how would that precept be obeyed, which requires us to let our light ſo ſhine, as that men may ſee our good works? Men in conſpicuous ſtations of life, and in particular, magiſtrates, are under the ſtrongeſt obligations to favour and ſupport the cauſe of religion, ſo it be done without oſtentation. And in private life our duty requires, that the fear of being thought weak or ſuperſtitious ſhould never deter us from making an open profeſſion of our faith. He that in his ſtudy affects to be found with a bible before him, may be juſtly ſuſpected of hypocrify; but he that, upon the approach of a friend, conveys it away,

In this passage, Johnson seems to prepare his readers for that contrariety which is often observed between the lives of authors and their writings, or, which is much the same, between preceptive and practical wisdom and virtue, as if they were scarcely consistent with each other, whereas, had his acquaintance lain, at this time, as in the latter part of his life it did, with persons of rank and condition, he might have formed different notions on the subject, and been convinced, that all ages, and even the present, have afforded examples of men, in whom learning and parts, and even wit, were but auxiliaries to qualities more estimable †.

The

away, is guilty of meanness, and, of the two, the greater criminal.

† Bishop Taylor and lord Clarendon were both men of learning and parts, teachers of wisdom, and exemplary in their lives: the same may be said of lord-chancellor Hardwicke and bishop Hoadly: the two latter, over and above their other great endowments, were classical scholars, and, what is more, they wrote verses; yet were they eminent for their skill in all the concerns of human life. Of the sagacity of the last, I am able to relate a fact which the bishop himself told me. A man of the name of Fournier, a clergyman and a proselyte from the Romish church, had, upon a franked cover with the bishop's name to it, forged a promissory note for 8800l. The bishop brought a bill in chancery for a discovery of the consideration of the pretended note, upon which, the defendant, with a view to entrap him, sent it by his wife to the bishop, with a permission for him, if he pleased, to burn it. The paper was of a singular form, and had on it the marks of several folds, the appearance of a rasure of the word *free*, and was, upon the face of it, in many other respects, extremely suspicious; but the bishop, seeing the snare that was laid for him, and with a view that these evidences of forgery should for ever remain with the note, first
made

The above facts and observations are meant to shew some of the most conspicuous features and foibles in Johnson's character, and go to prove, not only that his ferocity was not so terrific, as that any one endued with temper, and disposed to moderation and forbearance, might not only withstand, but overcome it, but that he had a natural imbecillity about him, arising from humanity and pity to the sufferings of his fellow-creatures, that was prejudicial to his interests; and also, that he neither sought nor expected praise for those acts of beneficence which he was daily performing, nor looked for any retribution from those who were nourished by his bounty. Indeed, they were such creatures as were incapable of being awed by a sense of his worth, or of discerning the motives that actuated him; they were people of the lowest and vulgarest minds*, whom idleness had made poor, and liberality impudent, and what is to be expected from such, is known to all that are, in the slightest degree, acquainted with the world; and lastly, they shew his method of accounting for that manifest and striking contrariety which, as he says, has been often observed, between the life of an author and his writings.

made a memorandum of these several particulars, and then, with great temper, returned it to the woman. Had he destroyed the note as he was authorised, and as almost any man else, knowing it to be a forgery, would have done, the *evidentia rei* had been lost, and the defendant had been in a better condition than he ever could be while the note existed. At the hearing of the cause, the note, upon the face of it, was condemned, and the bishop secured against demand of payment.

* Of such, lord Bacon observes, that 'the lowest virtues draw
' praise from them, the middle work in them astonishment and
' admiration; but of the higher virtues they have no sense or
' perceiving.' *Essay on Praise.*

The

The history of learning furnishes us with many examples of men who have deviated from the study of polite literature to that of the hermetic science, or, in plainer English, to that sublimer chemistry which leads to the transmutation of metals; and those, who may have heard that Johnson exercised himself in chemical processes, may perhaps think, that his view therein was suddenly to become the possessor of immense riches, but I am able to obviate this suspicion, and assure them, that his motive thereto was only curiosity, and his end mere amusement. At the time he frequented the club in Ivy lane, Dyer was going through a course of chemistry under Dr. Pemberton, of Gresham college, and would sometimes give us such descriptions of processes as were very entertaining, particularly to Johnson, who would listen to them attentively. We may suppose, that in the course of his reading, he had acquired some knowledge of the theory of the art, and that he wished for an opportunity of reducing that knowledge into practice: he thought that time now come, and though he had no fitter an apartment for a laboratory than the garret over his chambers in the Inner Temple, he furnished that with an alembic, with retorts, receivers, and other vessels adapted to the cheapest and least operose processes. What his aims were, at first, I know not, having forgotten the account he once gave me of the earliest of his chemical operations; but I have since learned, that they dwindled down to mere distillation, and that from substances of the simplest and coarsest sort, namely, peppermint, and the dregs of strong beer, from the latter whereof he

was

was able to extract a strong but very nauseous spirit, which all might smell, but few chose to taste.

Johnson had now considerably extended the circle of his acquaintance, and added to the number of his friends sundry persons of distinguished eminence: among them were, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Edmund Burke, Mr. Beauclerk, and Mr. Langton. With these he passed much of his time, and was desirous of being still closer connected. How much he delighted in convivial meetings, how he loved conversation, and how sensibly he felt the attractions of a tavern, has already been mentioned; and it was but a natural consequence of these dispositions, that he should wish for frequent opportunities of indulging them in a way that would free him from domestic restraints, from the observance of hours, and a conformity to the regimen of families. A tavern was the place for these enjoyments, and a weekly club was instituted for his gratification and the mutual entertainment and delight of its several members. The first movers in this association were Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds: the number of persons included in it was nine: the place of meeting was the Turk's head in Gerrard street; the day Monday in every week, and the hour of assembling seven in the evening. To this association I had the honour of being invited. The members were,

Johnson,	Mr. Topham Beauclerk,
Sir Joshua Reynolds,	Mr. Bennet Langton,
Mr. Edmund Burke,	Mr. Anthony Chamier, and
Christ. Nugent, M. D.	Myself.
Oliver Goldsmith, M. B.	

As some of the persons above-mentioned are happily

pily yet living, and are too eminently known to receive honour from any thing I am able to say of them, I shall content myself with giving the characters of such of them as are now no more.

Dr. Nugent was a physician, of the Romish communion, and rising into practice with persons of that persuasion. He was an ingenious, sensible, and learned man, of easy conversation, and elegant manners. Johnson had a high opinion of him, and always spoke of him in terms of great respect.

Goldsmith is well known by his writings to have been a man of genius and of very fine parts; but of his character and general deportment, it is the hardest task any one can undertake to give a description. I will, however, attempt it, trusting to be excused if, in the spirit of a faithful historian, I record as well his singularities as his merits.

There are certain memoirs of him extant, from which we learn, that his inclination, co-operating with his fortunes which were but scanty, led him into a course of life little differing from vagrancy, that deprived him of the benefits of regular study: it however gratified his humour, stored his mind with ideas and some knowledge, which, when he became settled, he improved by various reading; yet, to all the graces of urbanity he was a stranger. With the greatest pretensions to polished manners he was rude, and, when he most meant the contrary, absurd. He affected Johnson's style and manner of conversation, and, when he had uttered, as he often would, a laboured sentence, so tumid as to be scarce intelligible, would ask, if that was not truly Johnsonian; yet he loved not Johnson, but rather envied him for
his

his parts; and once intreated a friend to desist from praising him, 'for in doing so', said he, 'you harrow up my very soul.'

He had some wit, but no humour, and never told a story but he spoiled it. The following anecdotes will convey some idea of the style and manner of his conversation:

He was used to say he could play on the German-flute as well as most men;—at other times, as well as any man living; and in his poem of the Traveller, has hinted at this attainment in the following lines:

' To kinder skies, where gentler manners reign,
' I turn; and France displays her bright domain:
' Gay sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
' Pleas'd with thyself, whom all the world can please,
' How often have I led thy sportive choir,
' With tuneless pipe, beside the murmuring Loire!
' Where shading elms along the margin grew,
' And, freshen'd from the wave, the zephyr flew;
' And haply, though my harsh touch, falt'ring still,
' But mock'd all tune, and marr'd the dancers skill,
' Yet would the village praise my wond'rous power,
' And dance, forgetful of the noon-tide hour.'

But, in truth, he understood not the character in which music is written, and played on that instrument, as many of the vulgar do, merely by ear. Roubiliac the sculptor, a merry fellow, once heard him play, and minding to put a trick on him, pretended to be charmed with his performance, as also, that himself was skilled in the art, and intreated him to repeat the air, that he might write it down. Goldsmith readily consenting, Roubiliac called for paper, and scored

thereon a few five-lined staves, which having done, Goldsmith proceeded to play, and Roubiliac to write; but his writing was only such random notes on the lines and spaces as any one might set down who had ever inspected a page of music. When they had both done, Roubiliac shewed the paper to Goldsmith, who looking it over with seeming great attention, said it was very correct, and that if he had not seen him do it, he never could have believed his friend capable of writing music after him.

He would frequently preface a story thus:—‘ I’ll now tell you a story of myself, which some people laugh at, and some do not.’—

At the breaking up of an evening at a tavern, he intreated the company to sit down, and told them if they would call for another bottle they should hear one of his bons mots:—they agreed, and he began thus:—‘ I was once told that Sheridan the player, in order to improve himself in stage-gestures, had looking-glasses, to the number of ten, hung about his room, and that he practised before them; upon which I said, then there were ten ugly fellows together.’—The company were all silent: he asked why they did not laugh, which they not doing, he, without tasting the wine, left the room in anger.

He once complained to a friend in these words:—‘ Mr. Martinelli is a rude man: I said in his hearing, that there were no good writers among the Italians, and he said to one that sat near him, that I was very ignorant*.’

‘ People,’ said he, ‘ are greatly mistaken in me: a notion goes about, that when I am silent I mean to

* Mr. Martinelli is an Italian.

‘ be impudent; but I assure you, gentlemen, my silence
 ‘ arises from bashfulness.’

Having one day a call to wait on the late duke, then earl, of Northumberland, I found Goldsmith waiting for an audience in an outer room; I asked him what had brought him there: he told me an invitation from his lordship. I made my business as short as I could, and, as a reason, mentioned, that Dr. Goldsmith was waiting without. The earl asked me if I was acquainted with him: I told him I was, adding what I thought likely to recommend him. I retired, and staid in the outer room to take him home. Upon his coming out, I asked him the result of his conversation:—‘ His lordship,’ says he, ‘ told me he had read my poem,’ meaning the Traveller, ‘ and was much delighted with it; that he was
 ‘ going lord-lieutenant of Ireland, and that, hearing
 ‘ that I was a native of that country, he should be
 ‘ glad to do me any kindness.’—And what did you answer, asked I, to this gracious offer?—‘ Why,’ said he, ‘ I could say nothing but that I had a brother
 ‘ there, a clergyman, that stood in need of help: as
 ‘ for myself, I have no dependence on the promises
 ‘ of great men: I look to the booksellers for support;
 ‘ they are my best friends, and I am not inclined to
 ‘ forsake them for others.’

Thus did this idiot in the affairs of the world, trifle with his fortunes, and put back the hand that was held out to assist him! Other offers of a like kind he either rejected or failed to improve, contenting himself with the patronage of one nobleman, whose mansion afforded him the delights of a splendid table, and a retreat for a few days from the metropolis.

While I was writing the History of Music, he, at the club, communicated to me some curious matter : I desired he would reduce it to writing ; he promised me he would, and desired to see me at his chambers : I called on him there ; he stepped into a closet, and tore out of a printed book six leaves that contained what he had mentioned to me.

As he wrote for the booksellers, we, at the club, looked on him as a mere literary drudge, equal to the task of compiling and translating, but little capable of original, and still less of poetical composition : he had, nevertheless, unknown to us, written and addressed to the countess, afterwards duchess, of Northumberland, one of the finest poems of the lyric kind that our language has to boast of, the ballad ‘ Turn gentle Hermit of the dale * ;’ and surprised us with ‘ The Traveller,’ a poem that contains some particulars of his own history. Johnson was supposed to have assisted him in it ; but he contributed to the perfection of it only four lines : his opinion of it was, that it was the best written poem since the time of Pope. The favourable reception which this essay of his poetical talent met with, soon after tempted Goldsmith to the publication of his ‘ Deserted Village,’ the merits whereof, consisting in local particularities and beautiful descriptions of rural manners, are sufficiently known.

His poems are replete with fine moral sentiments, and bespeak a great dignity of mind ; yet he had no sense of the shame, nor dread of the evils, of poverty. In the latter he was at one time so involved,

* Printed in his poetical works, vol. I.

that for the clamours of a woman, to whom he was indebted for lodging, and for bailiffs that waited to arrest him, he was equally unable, till he had made himself drunk, to stay within doors, or go abroad to hawk among the booksellers his ‘Vicar of Wakefield.’ In this distress he sent for Johnson, who immediately went to one of them, and brought back money for his relief.

In his dealings with the booksellers, he is said to have acted very dishonestly, never fulfilling his engagements. In one year he got of them, and by his plays, the sum of 1800l. which he dissipated by gaming and extravagance, and died poor in 1774.

He that can account for the inconsistencies of character above-noted, otherwise than by shewing, that wit and wisdom are seldom found to meet in the same mind, will do more than any of Goldsmith’s friends were ever able to do. He was buried in the poets’ corner in Westminster abbey. A monument was erected for him by a subscription of his friends, and is placed over the entrance into St. Blase’s chapel. The inscription thereon was written by Johnson. This I am able to say with certainty, for he shewed it to me in manuscript.

The members of our club, that remain to be spoken of, were persons of less celebrity than him above-mentioned, but were better acquainted with the world, and qualified for social intercourse. Mr. Beauclerk was allied to the St. Alban’s family, and took his christian name from Mr. Topham of Windsor, the famous collector of pictures and drawings. To the character of a scholar, and a man of fine parts, he added that of a man of fashion, of which his

dress and equipage shewed him to be emulous. In the early period of his life he was the exemplar of all who wished, without incurring the censure of foppery, to become conspicuous in the gay world. Travel, and a long residence at Rome and at Venice, had given the last polish to his manners, and stored his mind with entertaining information. In painting and sculpture, his taste and judgment were accurate, in classic literature, exquisite; and in the knowledge of history, and the study of antiquities, he had few equals. His conversation was of the most excellent kind; learned, witty, polite, and, where the subject required it, serious; and over all his behaviour there beamed such a sunshine of cheerfulness and good humour, as communicated itself to all around him. He was a great collector of books, and left at his death a library, which, at a sale by auction, yielded upwards of five thousand pounds.

Mr. Anthony Chamier was descended from a French protestant family, that has produced one or more very eminent divines, and were refugees in this country at the end of the last century. He was bred to the profession of a stock-broker; but, having had a liberal education, his deportment and manner of transacting business distinguished him greatly from most others of that calling. He had acquired a knowledge of the modern languages, particularly of the Spanish, in the study whereof he took great delight. His connections, at his setting out in the world, were of the best kind, for very early in his life he was employed by those liberal-minded brothers the Van Necks, whose riches, and general munificence, have ranked them in the same class of wealthy

wealthy men with the Fuggers of Augsberg, a company of money-dealers, who, in their time, held the balance of the Antwerp exchange, and by their transactions at that mart, influenced the politics of all the courts of Europe *. By his dealings in the funds, and, it was supposed, with the advantage of intelligence which, previous to the conclusion of the peace before the last, he had obtained, he acquired such a fortune as enabled him, though young, to quit business, and become, what indeed he seemed by nature intended for, a gentleman. At the beginning of his present majesty's reign, he had a prospect of going secretary to an embassy to Spain, and was preparing for it, by the improvement of himself in the language of that country, but a change in the appointment of an ambassador kept him at home, and gave him opportunity of becoming acquainted with lord Hillsborough, who, upon his being made secretary of state the last time, took him for his under-secretary, in which station he died.

It was Johnson's original intention, that the number of this our club should not exceed nine, but Mr. Dyer, a member of that in Ivy lane before spoken of, and who for some years had been abroad, made his appearance among us, and was cordially received. By the recommendation of Mr. Belchier the banker, and member for Southwark, he had obtained an appointment to be one of the commissaries in our army in Germany; but, on the conclusion of the peace, he

* A curious account of these three brothers may be seen in Moreri's dictionary, art. Fugger ou Foucker. Mention of them is also made in the journal of Edward VI. inserted in an appendix to one of the volumes of bishop Burnet's History of the Reformation.

returned to England, very little the better for an employment which few have been known to quit without having made a fortune.

The hours which Johnson spent in this society seemed to be the happiest of his life: he would often applaud his own sagacity in the selection of it, and was so constant at our meetings as never to absent himself. It is true he came late, but then he stayed late, for, as has been already said of him, he little regarded hours. Our evening toast was the motto of Padre Paolo, 'Esto perpetua.' A lady, distinguished by her beauty, and taste for literature, invited us twice to a dinner at her house, which I alone was hindered from accepting. Curiosity was her motive, and possibly a desire of intermingling with our conversation the charms of her own. She affected to consider us as a set of literary men, and perhaps gave the first occasion for distinguishing the society by the name of the literary club, an appellation which it never assumed to itself.

At these our meetings, Johnson, as indeed he did every where, led the conversation, yet was he far from arrogating to himself that superiority, which, some years before, he was disposed to contend for. He had seen enough of the world to know, that respect was not to be extorted, and began now to be satisfied with that degree of eminence to which his writings had exalted him. This change in his behaviour was remarked by those who were best acquainted with his character, and it rendered him an easy and delightful companion. Our discourse was miscellaneous, but chiefly literary. Politics, the most vulgar of all topics, were alone excluded. On that subject most of us were of the same opinion. The British lion
was

was then licking his wounds, and we drank to the peace of old England*.

The institution of this society was in the winter of 1763, at which time Mr. Garrick was abroad with his wife, who, for the recovery of her health, was sent to the baths at Padua. Upon his return, he was informed of our association, and trusted, that the least intimation of a desire to come among us, would procure him a ready admission, but in this he was mistaken. Johnson consulted me upon it, and when I could find no objection to receiving him, exclaimed:—‘He will disturb us by his buffoonery;’—and afterwards so managed matters, that he was never formally proposed, nor, by consequence, ever admitted.

This conduct of Johnson gave me, for the first time, to understand, that the friendship between him and Garrick was not so strong as it might be supposed to be: it was not like that of David and Jonathan; it passed not the love of women, and hardly exceeded the strength of an adventitious intimacy: Garrick had a profound veneration for the learning and talents of Johnson, but was used to complain to me, that he was capricious in his friendship, and, as he termed it, coquettish in his display of it. Johnson, on his part, hated the profession of a player, and per-

* As I was the only seceder from this society, my withdrawing myself from it seems to require an apology. We seldom got together till nine; the enquiry into the contents of the larder, and preparing supper, took up till ten; and by the time that the table was cleared, it was near eleven, at which hour my servants were ordered to come for me; and, as I could not enjoy the pleasure of these meetings without disturbing the œconomy of my family, I chose to forego it.

haps might contemplate with indignation, that disposition of the public, which assigns to those who minister to their pleasures, greater rewards than to those whose employment it is to supply their most essential wants. He might possibly reflect that, in his outset in life as an instructor of youth, his hopes were bounded by the prospect of five hundred pounds a year, and that the mimetic powers of Garrick, for under that denomination he ranked all his excellencies, produced to the possessor of them an income of four thousand.

These are such excuses for Johnson's coolness towards an old friend as charity might suggest; but, alas! it had a deeper root, and it is to be feared that it sprung from envy, a passion, which he sometimes was candid enough to confess he was subject to, and laboured through his life to eradicate. His behaviour to Garrick was ever austere, like that of a schoolmaster to one of his scholars*, and he flattered himself, that in all he said and did, he stood in awe of his frown.—‘I was,’ said Johnson once to a friend, ‘last night behind the scenes at Drury-lane, and met Davy dressed for his part. I was glad to see him; but I believe he was ashamed to see me.’—A supposition hardly to be admitted, even if he had been dressed in the rags of Druggier.

* He assumed a right of correcting his enunciation, and, by an instance, convinced Garrick that it was sometimes erroneous.—‘You often,’ said Johnson, ‘mistake the emphatical word of a sentence.’—‘Give me an example,’ said Garrick.—‘I cannot,’ answered Johnson, ‘recollect one; but repeat the seventh commandment.’—Garrick pronounced it—‘Thou shalt not commit adultery.’—‘You are wrong,’ said Johnson: ‘it is a negative precept, and ought to be pronounced thus:

‘Thou shalt *not* commit adultery.’

Garrick took his rejection very patiently, and shewed his resentment of it no otherwise, than by enquiring of me from time to time how we went on at the club. He would often stop at my gate, in his way to and from Hampton, with messages from Johnson relating to his Shakespeare, then in the press, and ask such questions as these:—‘Were you at the club on Monday night?’—‘What did you talk of?’—‘Was Johnson there?’—‘I suppose he said something of Davy—that Davy was a clever fellow in his way, full of convivial pleasantries, but no poet, no writer, ha?’—I was vexed at these enquiries, and told him, that this perpetual solicitude about what was said of him, was unnecessary, and could only tend to disturb him; that he might well be content with that share of the public favour which he enjoyed, that he had nothing to do but to possess it in quietness, and that too great an anxiety to obtain applause would provoke envy, and tend to intercept, if not totally deprive him of it.

The greatest of Mr. Garrick’s foibles was, a notion of the importance of his profession: he thought that Shakespeare and himself were, or ought to be, the objects of all mens’ attention. When the king of Denmark was in England, he received an order from the lord-chamberlain to entertain that monarch with an exhibition of himself in six of his principal characters. In his way to London, to receive his instructions, he called on me, and told me this as news. I could plainly discern in his looks the joy that transported him; but he affected to be vexed at the shortness of the notice, and seemed to arraign the wisdom of our councils, by exclaiming—‘You see what heads they have!’

Johnson’s

Johnson's objection to the admission of Garrick may seem to be cynical, and to have arisen from jealousy or resentment, but it admits of palliation: the truth is, that Garrick was no disquisitor; his reading had been confined, and he could contribute but little to the pleasures of sober and instructive conversation. Even his knowledge of the world was derived through the medium of the dramatic writers, who, all men know, are not guides to be trusted; and, in his intercourse with mankind, and manner of conducting business, he frequently betrayed such ignorance and inattention, as the following instance will illustrate.

There stood near the dwelling of Mr. Garrick at Hampton, and adjoining to his garden next the river, a small house, the owner and occupier whereof was Mr. Peele a bookseller, who had retired from business. Mr. Peele had often said, that as he knew it would be an accommodation to Mr. Garrick, he had given directions, that at his decease he should have the refusal of it. A man in the neighbourhood had set his eye upon it, and formed a scheme to make it his own. He had got intelligence that there was a relation or friend of Mr. Peele's living in the country, and immediately on Mr. Peele's death applied to his executors, pretending that he had a commission from him to purchase the house at any price; and, upon this suggestion, procured a conveyance of it to a person nominated by him, but under a secret trust for himself. Mr. Garrick, seeing himself thus balked of his hopes, and in danger of being troubled with an ill neighbour, thought he had nothing to do but to complain. He told his sad story to me, and in a
lucky

lucky hour ; for, just before his entering my house, I had been reading the life of the lord-keeper Guildford, and therein a case of a similar fraud, against which his lordship decreed : it was the case of the duke of Buckinghamshire and Ambrose Phillips, who had purchased of the duke an estate as for Mr. He-neage Finch, a son of the lord Nottingham, but in truth for himself, at two thousand pounds less than he would have sold it for to any but Mr. Finch. Upon hearing Mr. Garrick's story, I searched farther, and found the case in law-language in Vernon's chancery reports, and giving him a note of it, told him he might file a bill in chancery, and, on the authority of that determination, hope for relief. About six months after, I being in town, a message came to me in the evening from Mr. Garrick, signifying, that his cause was to come on the next morning, and requesting me to furnish him with a note of a case that I had formerly mentioned to him as resembling his own. Astonished at his remissness, and knowing that no time was to be lost, I immediately borrowed the book I had referred him to, and giving it my servant, went with it to Drury-lane theatre, where, upon enquiry, I was informed, that he was busily employed in exhibiting an imitation of a spectacle then recent, the procession of the coronation of his present majesty, in an after-piece to the play for that night. I waited in an outer room till all was over, when I entered Mr. and Mrs. Garrick, and, after giving him time to recover from his fatigue, I told him what I had been doing to help him in his distress, and produced the book, but his thoughts were so wholly taken up by the pageant he
was

was come from, which seemed still to be passing before his eyes, that he could scarcely attend to me, but asked Mrs. Garrick twenty questions about it, how it went off, and whether she did not think the applause of the audience great. He then turned to me, took from me the book, and said he should lay it before his counsel. The book was returned in a few days, but I heard nothing of the decree of the court till some months after, when meeting with his brother George, in the court of requests, I asked him how the cause had gone :—‘ Oh,’ said he, ‘ with us :—the first purchase is decreed fraudulent, and the defendant is condemned in costs.’

Mr. Garrick’s forgetfulness and inattention, in a concern that gave him some uneasiness, is not to be accounted for by those who believe, contrary to the fact, that he was ever sufficiently awake to his own interest, nor indeed by any who were not well acquainted with his character. In all that related to the theatre he was **very** acute, but in business of other kinds a novice. His profession was of such a nature, as left him no intervals of thought or cool deliberation : his mind was either elevated to the highest pitch of intension, or let down to the lowest degree of remission. In the former state, it was inflated by the ideas with which the course of his reading had stored his memory ; in the latter, it sunk into an indolent levity, which indulged in jokes, in mimicry, and witticisms.

In the first of these situations, I have described him by the relation of his conduct in a law-suit : in a season of vacuity, he was another man, easy and chearful,
and

and disposed, out of every thing he saw or heard, to extract mirth. The following story I give as an instance of his pleasantry, at times when the business of the theatre did not occupy his thoughts.

Living at Twickenham, at about two miles distance from his house at Hampton, I made him, as I frequently did when in the country, an afternoon visit. It was in the month of August, and I found him and Mrs. Garrick in the garden, eating figs. He complained that the wasps, which that year were very numerous, had left him very few; and, talking farther about those noxious insects, told me he had heard, that a person near Uxbridge, having swallowed one of them in a draught of liquor, had died of the sting. I told him it was true, for that at a turnpike-meeting at Uxbridge I had dined with the apothecary that had attended him, and he had assured me of the fact.—‘I believe it,’ said Mr. Garrick, ‘and have been persuading this lady,’ pointing to Mrs. Garrick, ‘to do so; but I cannot convince her, and yet, she can believe the story of St. Ursula and the eleven thousand virgins!’—Mrs. Garrick, it is no secret, is of the Romish persuasion.

Davies, in his life of Mr. Garrick, has mentioned a variety of particulars that do honour to his memory. Among others, he gives several instances of liberality to his friends. Johnson would frequently say, that he gave away more money than any man of his income in England; and his readiness to give the profits of a night to public charities, and to families and individuals in distress, will long be remembered. He was the first that attempted to reform the stage, by banishing from it all profaneness and immorality, and by expunging

punging from the plays acted at his theatre, every expression capable of any other than a good meaning. And whereas it had for many years been the custom, at one or more of the theatres, to indulge the mob, in the evening of the lord-mayor's day, with the representation of 'The London Cuckolds,' a comedy written by Ravenscroft in times of great licentiousness, and abounding in scenes of vulgar humour, he paid a handsome compliment to the citizens, and shewed his regard for the welfare of youth, by discontinuing the practice, and substituting in its place the affecting tragedy of 'George Barnwell,' a play adapted to the situation and circumstances of city apprentices, and affording an instructive lesson of discretion and morality.

Notwithstanding the perpetual competition between him and Rich, for the favour of the town, they lived together upon the most friendly terms. Rich, who was never celebrated either for his wit or his understanding, once made him a very elegant compliment: the occasion was this: Rich had improved his house at Covent garden, by altering the disposition of the seats, so as to accommodate a greater number of spectators than formerly it would, and Mr. Garrick wishing to see these improvements, Mr. Rich invited him to the house, and went with him all over it. In the course of their survey, Mr. Garrick asked, in the language of the theatre, what sum of money the house would hold.—'Sir,' said Mr. Rich, 'that question I am at present unable to answer; but were Mr. Garrick to appear but one night on my stage, I should be able to tell to the utmost shilling.'

After

After all that has been said of Mr. Garrick, envy must own, that he owed his celebrity to his merit; and yet, of that himself seemed so diffident, that he practised sundry little, but innocent arts, to insure the favour of the public. He kept up an interest in the city by appearing, about twice in a winter, at Tom's coffee-house in Cornhill, the usual rendezvous of young merchants at 'change time; and frequented a club, established for the sake of his company, at the Queen's-arms tavern in St. Paul's church-yard, where were used to assemble Mr. Samuel Sharpe the surgeon, Mr. Paterfon the city-solicitor, Mr. Draper the bookseller, Mr. Clutterbuck a mercer, and a few others; they were none of them drinkers, and in order to make a reckoning, called only for French wine. These were his standing council in theatrical affairs, and were of use to him in moderating his resentment after those riots at his theatre, which would sometimes happen, and the indignation he once felt upon an attack on his dwelling-house, in which the windows thereof were broken.

He had also a strong party of friends at Batson's coffee-house, and among them Dr. Wilson a physician, a man of great learning*, but no practice, who having an easy fortune and no family, and being master of his own time, was at liberty to indulge himself in a variety of pursuits and humours that distinguished him from most other men. He lodged in an obscure part of the town, and spent his mornings in mathematical studies; but at noon was constantly to

* He was the editor of the works of Benjamin Robins, published in two volumes 8vo.

be seen at Batson's, with a circle of persons round him, whom he entertained with his conversation. He had no taste for polite literature or stage entertainments; but in his old age took it into his head to be an admirer of Mr. Garrick, and seldom failed to be at his theatre, whenever he had a part in the play of the night. His constant appearance there had procured him almost a prescriptive right to a particular seat in the pit. In that region of the house he was the first, and almost the loudest applauder of Mr. Garrick, and his praises were the chief subject of his discourse the succeeding day. To this person, as to a city-friend, Mr. Garrick held himself obliged, and by many personal civilities he courted his favour.

Such as those above noted were the foibles in the character of that celebrated actor of whom I have been speaking, and such were the arts which he practised to acquire and ensure popularity; arts as unnecessary as they were innocent, seeing, that almost from the time he first became known, he was in the actual possession of that applause which he was seeking, and received from the public an ample reward of reputation, as well for the part he acted in social life, as for his excellent performance on the stage.

Besides Mr. Garrick, there were others that were desirous of becoming members of this our club, the fame whereof had spread abroad, and induced many, who hoped to acquire a reputation for literature, to wish for an admission among us. That unfortunate divine, as he was called, Dr. William Dodd, was one of the number, and made a secret effort for this purpose. This person, at that time, dwelt with his wife in an obscure corner of Hounslow heath,
near

near a village called Worton; but kept, in a back lane near him, a girl who went by the name of Kennedy. His pretensions to learning, and especially to classical erudition, were very great; and he had in his house a few young gentlemen, who, at very expensive rates, were committed to his care, as to an academy, for instruction. A brother of his wife's rented some land of me, and of him I learned from time to time many particulars respecting his character and manner of living, which latter, as he represented it, was ever such as his visible income would no way account for. He said that he was the most importunate suitor for preferment ever known, and that himself had been the bearer of letters and messages to great men, soliciting promotion to vacant livings, and had hardly escaped kicking down stairs. Dodd's wish to be received into our society was conveyed to us only by a whisper, and that being the case, all opposition to his admission became unnecessary.

Johnson was now at ease in his circumstances: he wanted his usual motive to impel him to the exertion of his talents, necessity, and he sunk into indolence. Whoever called in on him at about mid-day, found him and Levett at breakfast, Johnson in deshabille, as just risen from bed, and Levett filling out tea for himself and his patron alternately, no conversation passing between them. All that visited him at these hours, were welcome. A night's rest, and breakfast, seldom failed to refresh and fit him for discourse, and whoever withdrew went too soon. His invitations to dinners abroad were numerous, and he seldom balked them. At evening parties, where were

no cards, he very often made one; and from these, when once engaged, most unwillingly retired.

In the relaxation of mind, which almost any one might have foreseen would follow the grant of his pension, he made little account of that lapse of time, on which, in many of his papers, he so severely moralizes. And, though he was so exact an observer of the passing minutes, as frequently, after his coming from church, to note in his diary how many the service took up in reading, and the sermon in preaching; he seemed to forget how many years had passed since he had begun to take in subscriptions for his edition of Shakespeare. Such a torpor had seized his faculties, as not all the remonstrances of his friends were able to cure: applied to some minds, they would have burned like caustics, but Johnson felt them not: to other objects he was sufficiently attentive, as I shall presently shew.

In the performance of the engagement I am under, I find myself compelled to make public, as well those particulars of Johnson that may be thought to abase as those that exalt his character. Among the former, may be reckoned the credit he for some time gave to the idle story of the Cock-lane ghost, concerning which the following facts are the least unworthy of being noted. In the month of January 1762, it was reported, that at a house in Cock lane near West Smithfield, there were heard certain noises, accompanied with extraordinary circumstances, tending to the discovery of the death of a young woman who was said to have been destroyed by poison. The agent in this business was a girl, who pretended, that
the

the spirit of the deceased appeared to her, and terrified her with the noises above-mentioned. This report drew many persons to the house, who, being thus assembled, put several questions to the girl, and received answers, as from the ghost, describing the circumstances of the poisoning, and a promise, by an affirmative signal, that it would attend one of the querists into the vault under the church of St. John, Clerkenwell, where the body was deposited, and give a token of its presence by a knock upon the coffin: it was therefore determined to make trial of the existence or veracity of the supposed spirit; and it was then advertised, that the person to whom the promise was made, was about to visit the vault, and accordingly the whole company present adjourned to the church. He who had a claim to the performance of the promise, and one more, went into the vault, and solemnly required to hear the signal; but nothing more ensued. The person accused of the poisoning, with several others, then descended the vault, but no effect was perceived. It was, therefore, the opinion of the whole assembly, that the girl had some art of making or counterfeiting particular noises, and that there was no agency of any higher cause.

Johnson, whose sentiments with respect to supernatural agency are discoverable in many parts of his writings, was prompted by curiosity to visit this place, and wait for the appearance of the ghost. Mr. Saunders Welch, his intimate friend, would have dissuaded him from his purpose, urging, that it would expose him to ridicule; but all his arguments had no effect; he went to the house, and, as it is supposed, into the

church, and gave countenance to the vulgar expectation, that the ghost would appear; but at length, being convinced that the whole transaction was an imposture, he drew up, as may be inferred from the style and advertisement at the end of the paper, an account of the detection thereof, published in the Gentleman's Magazine for February 1762.

Soon after this, the imposture being more clearly and even to demonstration detected, the persons concerned in it were prosecuted, and underwent a punishment suited to their offence.

What Mr. Welch foretold, in his advice to Johnson, touching this imposture, was now verified: he was censured for his credulity; his wisdom was arraigned, and his religious opinions resolved into superstition. A reverend divine of the time, who had taken effectual care by his conduct to avoid the like imputations, but was enough distinguished by a greater folly, political enthusiasm, exhibited him to ridicule in a satyrical poem, and revived the remembrance of that engagement to the public, which, by this, and other instances of the laxity of his mind, he seemed not much inclined to fulfil.

Nor was this all: that facetious gentleman Mr. Foote, who, upon the strength and success of his satyrical vein in comedy, had assumed the name of the modern Aristophanes, and at his theatre, had long entertained the town with caricatures of living persons, with all their singularities and weaknesses, thought that Johnson at this time was become a fit subject for ridicule, and that an exhibition of him in a drama written for the purpose, in which himself should represent Johnson, and in his mien, his garb, and his speech,

speech, should display all his comic powers, would yield him a golden harvest. Johnson was apprised of his intention; and gave Mr. Foote to understand, that the licence under which he was permitted to entertain the town, would not justify the liberties he was accustomed to take with private characters, and that if he persisted in his design, himself would be a spectator of his disgrace, and would, by a severe chastisement of his representative on the stage, and in the face of the whole audience, convince the world, that, whatever were his infirmities, or even his foibles, they should not be made the sport of the public, or the means of gain to any one of his profession*.

Foote,

* Had Johnson been provoked to an exercise of his prowess on this occasion, it would not have been the first display of his resentment on the stage of a theatre. He was once with Garrick at the representation of a play in his native city of Lichfield, when, having taken his seat in a chair placed on the stage, he had soon a call to quit it. A Scots officer, who had no good-will towards him, persuaded an innkeeper of the town to take it, and he did as he was bid. Johnson, on his return, finding his seat full, civilly told the intruder, that by going out it was not his intention to give it up, and demanded it as his right: the innkeeper, encouraged by the officer, seeming resolved to maintain his situation, Johnson expostulated the matter with him; but finding him obstinate, lifted up the chair, the man sitting in it, and, with such an Herculean force, flung both to the opposite side of the stage, that the Scotsman cried out, ‘Damn him, he has broke his limbs;’ but that not being the case, Johnson having thus emptied the chair, and Mr. Walmfley interposing, he resumed his seat in it, and with great composure sat out the play.

Johnson had great confidence in his corporeal strength, and, from this and some other particulars in his life, I am inclined to think he was vain of it. Such foibles are not uncommon in the greatest characters. Sir Isaac Newton, at the age of four-

Foote, upon this intimation, had discretion enough to desist from his purpose. Johnson entertained no resentment against him, and they were ever after friends.

Johnson was insensible to the effects of this abuse; but the poem above-mentioned had brought to remembrance, that his edition of Shakespeare had long been due. His friends took the alarm, and, by all the arts of reasoning and persuasion, laboured to convince him, that having taken subscriptions for a work in which he had made no progress, his credit was at stake. He confessed he was culpable, and promised from time to time to begin a course of such reading as was necessary to qualify him for the work: this was no more than he had formerly done in an engagement with Coxeter, to whom he had bound himself to write the life of Shakespeare, but he never could be prevailed on to begin it, so that, even now, it was questioned whether his promises were to be relied on. For this reason, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and some other of his friends, who were more concerned for his reputation than himself seemed to be, contrived to entangle him by a wager, or some other pecuniary engagement, to perform his task by a certain time, and this, together possibly with some distrust of the continuance of his mental powers, set him to work; but, as he had been remiss in making collections for the purpose, he

score, would strip up his shirt-sleeve to shew his muscular, brawny arm, and relate how dextrous he was in his youth at boxing. And an intimate friend of mine, a serjeant at law, of the first eminence in his profession, who had nearly lost the use of his feet, was used to relate to me his dancing whole nights, when a young man, without feeling the least weariness.

found

found it an irksome task. Theobald declares, that to settle the text of his author, and to elucidate obscure passages in him, he had found it necessary to peruse a great number of plays and other publications, to the very titles of most whereof it is certain Johnson was a stranger. He, it is true, had read as many old English books as came in his way, but he had never sought after any such; he was no collector, and in fact was destitute of materials for his work. All therefore that he did, or could do, after the waste of so much time, was, to read over his author in the former editions, and solicit help from his friends; who, if he is not mistaken in his assertion, were but slack in offering him assistance. To me, among others, he did the honour of sending for such notes as he thought I might have made in the course of my reading. Mr. Garrick was his messenger, as he frequently passed by my gate in the country; and, though I was at that time deeply engaged in the History of Music, I furnished him with a few remarks, which, unimportant as they are, he thought fit to insert. Others, more valuable, he got from such of his friends as were at leisure to assist him.

The year 1765 gave to the world an edition of Shakespeare's dramatic works by Samuel Johnson, the greatest proficient in vernacular erudition, and one of the ablest critics of his time. Much had been expected from it, and little now appeared to have been performed; a few conjectural emendations of the text, and some scattered remarks on particular passages, were all that was presented to our view that had any pretence to novelty, except
some

some general observations, which serve to illustrate the beauties and mark the defects of the several plays, and are inserted at the end of each.

For the apparent meagreness of the work, the paucity of the notes, and other evidences of the editor's want of industry, and indeed unfitness for the office of a scholiast, so far as it regards the illustration of the text, some atonement, it must be confessed, is made by the preface, wherein, as if the author had reserved himself for one great effort of his genius, all the powers of eloquence and critical erudition are displayed. In truth, it is an essay on dramatic poesy in general, in which, with a degree of perspicacity that had never before been exercised on the subject, he has exhibited the perfections of his author in a blaze of splendour that distracts us with its radiance. To attemper our admiration, he has, however, thought fit to note the slumbers of even this great genius, his violations of historical truth, his deviations from dramatic regularity, his low conceits, and the frequent recurrence of scenes that suspend actions of importance, and, wherever interposed, are excrescences; and this not in a style of perfunctory disquisition, but with such a degree of asperity as critics discover when they are criticising the works of a rival.

For thus detracting from the merit of his favourite, Mr. Garrick was to the highest degree exasperated with Johnson: he reproached him, though not to his face, with want of feeling and the knowledge of human nature, of which, he said, he understood nothing, but what he had learned from books:—

‘ All

‘ All that he writes,’ added he, ‘ comes from his head :
 ‘ Shakespeare, when he sat down to write, dipped his
 ‘ pen into his own heart *.’

* The recollection of this forcible and just expression, which Mr. Garrick uttered to me, induces me to relate a transaction, that may serve to prove, how deeply Shakespeare was skilled in the science of human nature, and that his imagination could suggest sentiments and language suitable to characters and situations, with which he could not be supposed ever to have been conversant. No one thinks that he had ever been a witness to such a scene as that in Macbeth, where the lady, who had excited her husband to the murder of the king, is herself restrained from the perpetration of it by the sole reflection, that in his sleep he resembled her father : yet see how wonderfully his representation of it accords with the workings of nature.

A few years since, and while I was chairman of the quarter-sessions for the county of Middlesex, an indictment came before me for trial at Hicks’s-hall, the ground whereof was the following case. A vessel, moored by a hawser or cable-rope, was lying in the Thames near Wapping, at a time when a barge was driving up the river with so strong a tide, that the men on board her were in great danger of running, as they call it, athwart the hawser and of oversetting. To prevent this mischief, a young active man, who guided the barge, leaped into the vessel, a liberty in such cases always allowed, and loosening the end of the hawser from what it was tied to, let it drop. The men on board the vessel, ignorant perhaps of the usage, opposed the young man in his attempt, and a fray ensued, in which, provoked to resistance, he seized a hand-spike, and with it knocked one of the sailors down. The noise of this scuffle drew up the master, a person advanced in years, who all the while was under deck, and he being told what had passed, asked the stranger what he meant by knocking his man down.—‘ I did it,’ answered he, ‘ in my own defence ; and if you had been in his place, and your old grey
 ‘ locks had not put me in mind of my own father, I would have
 ‘ knocked you down too.’—The very sentiment that restrained lady Macbeth from the murder of Duncan :

‘ ————— Had he not resembled
 ‘ My father as he slept, I had don’t,’

Johnson

Johnson seemed to be conscious that this work would fall short of the expectations it had raised, and endeavoured to ward off the censure of the public by an insinuation in the preface, that his friends had been backward in furnishing him with assistance. The passage is pretty strongly pointed, and is here given in his own words.

‘ Having classed the observations of others, I was
 ‘ at last to try what I could substitute for their mis-
 ‘ takes, and how I could supply their omissions. I
 ‘ collated such copies as I could procure, and wished
 ‘ for more, but have not found the collectors of these
 ‘ rarities very communicative. Of the editions which
 ‘ chance or kindness put into my hands, I have given
 ‘ an enumeration, that I may not be blamed for neg-
 ‘ lecting what I had not the power to do.’

Few there were who saw this passage, and knew that Mr. Garrick had the earliest editions of all Shakespeare’s plays, but construed this into a reproach on him; in that sense he understood it, and it gave him great offence. To clear himself of the imputation of a conduct so unfriendly, he protested to me, that his collection had ever been accessible to Johnson, and that himself had signified, that any or all the books in it were at his service; and, farther to convince me, he, at the next visit I made him, called in his man Charles, and bade him relate to me his instructions respecting the use of his library, or the loan of books to Johnson.—‘ Sir,’ said the man, ‘ I was told to let Mr. Johnson have what-
 ‘ ever books he wanted; but he never applied for
 ‘ any*.’ To

* Mr. Garrick knew not what risque he ran by this offer. Johnson

To say the truth, Mr. Garrick was rather forward in offering the use of his library to the writers of the time: he did it to Mr. Whalley, when editing the works of Ben Jonson, and to Dr. Percy, the collector and publisher of the ‘Reliques of ancient English poetry.’ His view, as I conjecture, was, to receive, in return for his kindness, thanks, with perhaps some additional compliment; and in these two instances he was gratified with both. I imagine that Johnson was unwilling to buy the favour intended him at that price, and that therefore he declined it.

We are not to suppose that the publication of Shakespeare, a work undertaken without any impulse, and executed with reluctance, would greatly add to the literary reputation of Johnson; yet such was the character he had acquired by his dictionary, and other of his writings, that the heads of the university of Dublin thought him worthy of the highest academical honour that it was in their power to confer, and accordingly, on the twenty-third day of July 1765, he was, by them, presented with a diploma, creating him doctor in both laws; a distinction the more to be valued as it was unsolicited, and a voluntary testimony of the esteem in which he was held by that learned body. The causes assigned for bestowing

son had so strange a forgetfulness of obligations of this sort, that few who lent him books ever saw them again. Among the books in his library, at the time of his decease, I found a very old and curious edition of the works of Politian, which appeared to belong to Pembroke college, Oxford. It was probably taken out of the library when he was preparing to publish a part of that author, viz. in 1734, and had been used as his own for upwards of fifty years.

it are contained in the following words, part of the instrument, ‘ob egregiam scriptorum elegantiam et utilitatem.’

His great affection for our own universities, and particularly his attachment to Oxford, prevented Johnson from receiving this honour as it was intended, and he never assumed the title which it conferred. He was as little pleased to be called Doctor in consequence of it, as he was with the title of Domine, which a friend of his once incautiously addressed him by. He thought it alluded to his having been a school-master; and, though he has ably vindicated Milton from the reproach that Salmasius meant to fix on him, by saying that he was of that profession*, he wished to have it forgot, that himself had ever been driven to it as the means of subsistence, and had failed in the attempt.

Johnson was now arrived at the fifty-sixth year of his age, and had actually attained to that state of independence, which before he could only affect. He was now in possession of an income that freed him from the apprehensions of want, and exempted him from the necessity of mental labour. He had discharged his obligations to the public, and, with no incumbrance of a family, or any thing to controul his wishes or desires, he had his mode of living to chuse. Blest with what was to him a competence, he had it now in his power to study, to meditate, and to put in practice a variety of good resolutions, which, almost from his first entrance into life, he had been making.

* See his life of Milton among the lives of the poets.

Some specimens of these have been given in a collection of prayers and devotional exercises lately published by his direction, to which I could add a great number. They are the effusions of a fervent piety, and the result of most severe examinations of himself in his hours of retirement; and have for their objects, early rising, a good use of time, abstinence, the study of the Scriptures, and a constant attendance on divine worship; in the performance of all which duties he seems to construe his frequent interruptions into criminal remissness. One extract from his diary I however here insert, for the purpose of shewing the state of his mind at about the beginning of the year 1766.

‘ Since the last reception of the Sacrament, I hope I
 ‘ have no otherwise grown worse, than as continuance
 ‘ in sin makes the sinner’s condition more dangerous.
 ‘ Since last New-year’s day, I have risen every morning
 ‘ by eight, at least, not after nine: which is more
 ‘ superiority over my habits than I have ever before
 ‘ been able to obtain. Scruples still distress me. My
 ‘ resolution, with the blessing of God, is, to contend
 ‘ with them, and, if I can, to conquer them.

‘ My resolutions are,

- ‘ To conquer scruples.
- ‘ To read the bible this year.
- ‘ To try to rise more early.
- ‘ To study divinity.
- ‘ To live methodically.
- ‘ To oppose idleness.
- ‘ To frequent divine worship.’

It was a frequent practice with him, in his addresses to the divine Majesty, to commemorate and recommend to mercy his wife and departed friends; and the knowledge thereof has induced a suspicion, that he adopted the Romish tenet of Purgatory. To clear his memory from this imputation, I am necessitated to mention a few particulars which I learned from him in conversation, that may serve to shew, that no such conclusion is to be drawn from his practice in this respect; for that his acquiescence therein arose from a controversy, which, about the year 1715, was agitated between certain divines of a Protestant communion, that professed to deny, not less than they did the doctrine of transubstantiation, that of purgatory.

These were, the non-juring clergy of the time; of whom, and also of their writings, Johnson was ever used to speak with great respect. One of them, Dr. Thomas Brett, was a man profoundly skilled in ritual literature, as appears by a dissertation of his, printed, together with a collection of ancient liturgies, in 1720*; and he, as I infer from the style of the book and the method of reasoning therein, wrote a tract intitled, ‘Reasons for restoring some prayers and directions, as they stand in the communion-service of the first English reformed liturgy, compiled by the bishops in the second and third years of king Edward VI.’ among which he argues for the following pe-

* Johnson once told me, he had heard his father say, that when he was young in trade, king Edward the sixth’s first liturgy was much enquired for, and fetched a great price; but that the publication of this book, which contained the whole communion office as it stands in the former, reduced the price of it to that of a common book.

titution, part of the prayer for the whole state of
 Christ's church, since called a prayer for the whole
 state of Christ's church militant here on earth. ' We
 ' commend unto thy mercye, O Lord, all other thy
 ' seruauntes, which are departed hence from us, with
 ' the signe of faythe, and nowe do reſte in the ſlepe of
 ' peace: Graunte unto them, we beſeche thee, thy
 ' mercy, and euerlaſtyng peace, and that at the daie
 ' of the generall reſurreccion, we and all they which
 ' bee of the miſticall body of thy ſonne, may altogether
 ' bee ſet on his right hand, and heare that his moſt
 ' ioyfull voice: Come unto me, O ye that be bleſſed
 ' of my father, and poſſeſſe the kingdome whiche is
 ' prepared for you from the begynning of the worlde:
 ' Graunt this, O Father, for Jeſus Chriſtes ſake, our
 ' onely mediatur and aduocate.'

He firſt ſhews, that the recommending the dead to
 the mercy of God is nothing of the remains of popery,
 but a conſtant uſage of the primitive church, and for
 this aſſertion, he produces the authority of Tertullian,
 who flouriſhed within an hundred years after the death
 of the apoſtle St. John, and alſo, the authority of St.
 Cyprian, St. Cyril, St. Ambroſe, St. Epiphanius, St.
 Chryſoſtom, and St. Auguſtine, by citations from the
 ſeveral writings of thoſe fathers.

He then argues, that this cuſtom neither ſuppoſes
 the modern purgatory, nor gives encouragement to
 libertinism and vice; that the ancient church be-
 lieved the recommending the dead a ſerviceable
 office; that the cuſtom ſeems to have gone upon
 this principle, that ſupreme happineſs is not to be
 expected till the reſurrection, and that the interval

between death and the end of the world is a state of imperfect bliss; the church therefore, concludes he, might believe her prayers for good people would improve their condition, and raise the satisfactions of this period.

No one will say that these are mean authorities, or object to the practice of thus recommending the dead, as an innovation, excepting those persons who reject all tradition in matters of religion. Bucer was one that did, and, therefore, being consulted in the revival of king Edward's first liturgy, he argued, that there being no express warrant in Scripture for the practice, prayer for the dead was sinful; and, accordingly, the words contended for were omitted in the second.

This tract was, with great acuteness, and no less learning, answered by another nonjuring divine, in one intitled 'No sufficient reasons for restoring some prayers and directions of king Edward the sixth's liturgy.' A reply was given to it, and the controversy was carried on to a great length; the result of it was, a schism among the nonjurors: those, for restoring the prayers, compiled a new communion-office; others, who were against widening the breach with the national church, chose to abide by the present form; and this diversity of sentiments and practice was, as Johnson once told me, the ruin of the nonjuring cause.

In the study of this controversy, which I have reason to think interested Johnson very deeply, he seems to have taken part with Dr. Brett and the separatists his followers, whose conduct is accounted for and vindicated, in the dissertation on liturgies above-mentioned.

Such

Such as are disposed to charge Johnson with weakness and superstition, and are so weak as to insinuate that, because he recommended his deceased wife and friends to the divine mercy, (though with the qualifying words, 'so far as it may be lawful') he must have been popishly affected, or a believer in the doctrine of purgatory, may hence learn to be less severe in their censures, and lament their ignorance of ecclesiastical history, which would have taught them, that the practice prevailed, long before popery was established, or purgatory thought of; and that, though it may not upon the whole be defensible, there is more to be said for it, than many of the enemies to his memory are able to answer*.

And to those of his friends, who think that, for the sake of his reputation, the prayers and meditations, in which these sentiments have appeared, should have been suppressed, it ought surely to be an answer, that they were put into the hands of the reverend divine, who, to my knowledge, attended him with great affection and assiduity through his last illness, with an express charge to commit them to the press, and who, if he had forborne this friendly office, had deprived a charitable and laudable institution of a benefit, which the performance of it was intended to confer.

With a view to improve the leisure he now enjoyed, and seemingly determined to reform those habits of indolence, which, in the former part of his life, he had

* Johnson in his early years associated with this sect of nonjurors, and from them, probably, imbibed many of his religious and political principles.

contracted, he removed from the Temple into a house in Johnson's court, Fleet street, and invited thither his friend Mrs. Williams. An upper room, which had the advantages of a good light and free air, he fitted up for a study, and furnished with books, chosen with so little regard to editions or their external appearance, as shewed they were intended for use, and that he disdained the ostentation of learning. Here, he was in a situation and circumstances that enabled him to enjoy the visits of his friends, and to receive them in a manner suitable to the rank and condition of many of them. A silver standish, and some useful plate, which he had been prevailed on to accept as pledges of kindness from some who most esteemed him, together with furniture that would not have disgraced a better dwelling, banished those appearances of squalid indigence, which, in his less happy days, disgusted those who came to see him.

In one of his diaries he noted down a resolution to take a seat in the church: this he might possibly do about the time of this his removal. The church he frequented was that of St. Clement Danes, which, though not his parish-church, he preferred to that of the Temple, which I recommended to him, as being free from noise, and, in other respects, more commodious. His only reason was, that in the former he was best known. He was not constant in his attendance on divine worship; but, from an opinion peculiar to himself, and which he once intimated to me, seemed to wait for some secret impulse as a motive to it.

I could

I could never collect from his discourse, that he was drawn to public worship by the charms of pulpit eloquence, or any affection for popular preachers, who, in general, are the worst; nor can I form any judgment of the value he set on it, having never been present with him at church but once, and that at a time, when, in compliment to him, as it may be supposed, the preacher gave us a sermon, that red like a Saturday's Rambler*, and was, by many, soon discovered to have been cast in the same mould, or, in other words, of Johnson's composing; but he seemed to think it a duty to accept in good part the endeavours of all public instructors, however meanly qualified for the office, and ever to forbear exercising his critical talents on the effusions of men inferior in learning and abilities to himself. Probably he, on such occasions, recollected the quaint distich of Herbert:

' The worst have something good; where all want
' sense,
' God takes the text and preacheth patience.'

Or he might have read, among the essays of the Messieurs of Port-Royal, one that teaches us how to profit by bad preaching.

The Sundays which he passed at home were, nevertheless, spent in private exercises of devotion†, and

* The Ramblers published on Saturdays were generally on religious or moral subjects.

† He was accustomed on these days to read the Scriptures, and particularly the Greek Testament, with the paraphrase of Erasmus.

and sanctified by acts of charity of a singular kind : on that day he accepted of no invitation abroad, but gave a dinner to such of his poor friends as might else have gone without one.

He had little now to conflict with but what he called his morbid melancholy, which, though oppressive, had its intermissions, and left him the free exercise of all his faculties, and the power of enjoying the conversation of his numerous friends and visitants. These reliefs he owed in a great measure to the use of opium, which, as I have elsewhere mentioned, he was accustomed to take in large quantities, the effect whereof was generally such an exhilaration of his spirits as he sometimes suspected for intoxication.

I am now about to mention a remarkable era of his life, distinguished by a connexion that, for many years, was a source of great satisfaction and comfort to him. It was a friendship, contracted, as his diary imports, in 1765, with Mr. Thrale, a brewer, in Southwark, who, though a follower of a trade, which in other countries is lightly thought of, yet as in this it implies great opulence, and the power of conducting in various ways to the interests of the community, ranked as a gentleman. He had received the benefit of an university education, and was a representative in parliament, as his father had been, for the above-mentioned borough ; and in every view of his character, could not but be deemed a valuable addi-

Very late in his life he formed a resolution to read the bible through, which he confessed to me he had never done ; at the same time lamenting, that he had so long neglected to peruse, what he called the charter of his salvation.

tion

tion to the number of Johnson's friends. To his villa at Streatham, in Surrey, Johnson was invited, not as a guest, but as a resident, whenever he was disposed to change the town for the country air: for his accommodation, an apartment was allotted; for his entertainment, a library was furnished with such books as himself chose, and little was wanting to persuade him, that, when at Streatham, he was at home. He soon experienced the salutary effects of his new abode, and there is little doubt that to it he was indebted for some years of his life.

It might have been expected that Johnson, in the easy circumstances in which he had for some time felt himself, and with such a love of independence as he affected, would have declined obligations that he was unable to repay, at least in kind; but he knew that friendship weighs not in a balance the favours it confers. Mr. Thrale's tenders carried in them all the evidences of sincerity, and he had the example of men, equally wise with himself, to justify his acceptance of such invitations as were now made him*. The only obligation they subjected him to
was,

* The instances of this kind, that occur in the lives of eminent men, to speak of those of this country only, are not few. Hobbes of Malmesbury, passed many years of his life in philosophical retirement at Chatsworth, in the family of the earl of Devonshire; memorials whereof were formerly visible in Latin verses, written by him, with a diamond, on the windows of the house. Selden, at the countess of Kent's in White-friars, adjoining to the Temple. Mr. Locke was considered as one of the family of lady Masham, at Oates in the county of Essex. She was a daughter of Dr. Ralph Cudworth, a woman of such eminence for learning and piety, that

was, that of supporting his character, and, in a family where there were many visitants, furnishing such conversation, as was to be expected from a man who had distinguished himself by his learning, his wit, and his eloquence. This, it must be confessed, was a burdensome task to one who, like others, must be supposed to have had his sombrous intervals, and, in the hour of repletion, to wish for the indulgence of being silent, or, at least, of talking like other men. To be continually uttering apophthegms, or speeches worthy of remembrance, was more than could have been expected of Socrates †.

Besides

the book intitled, ‘The whole duty of man’ was, for some time, believed to be of her writing; and lastly, Dr. Isaac Watts found a comfortable retreat from the cares of the world, in the family of Sir Thomas Abney, and his worthy descendants, at Newington in Middlesex. Johnson’s situation, in Mr. Thrale’s family, was not so constant and uninterrupted as was that of the persons above-mentioned in their several abodes; but, in respect of the liberties allowed him, and the kindness with which he was treated, the comparison is no way to the disadvantage of this his friend.

† What were Johnson’s sentiments of a situation like this, may be gathered from the following note, which I meet with in his *adversaria*, or collections for the *Rambler*, now in my possession, and spoken of in a preceding page.

‘Philomeidis invited to the house of Largus in the country, as a wit. Largus means to credit himself by his acquaintance—calls in the country to be entertained—they come, big with expectation, full of awe. Silent, therefore, I silent—Disappointed—Largus chagrined—Behaviour of boors before a wit—their eagerness, expectation, surprise, at any thing common. I near dull—Cleora, a lady dreaded for her elegance and knowledge, came by chance; I shone: I now am proud; nobody worth speaking to. Inform them, Mr. Rambler, that no man can be a wit at pleasure, or converse wittily by himself.—I was at first invited

‘to

Besides the conveniences for study, with which he was furnished at Streatham, he had opportunities of exercise, and the pleasure of airings and excursions. He was once prevailed on by Mr. Thrale to join in

‘ to tables---my friend now goes without me---I restrain, not direct.

‘ Nothing so unfortunate as a wit by profession, one who raises expectation at his entry—always in debt---many pay with common places—others unwilling to part with what chance has brought them, spend their lives in straining, or get at one place to retail in another. Wit depends upon a thousand casualties—an occasion, combination of ideas, presence of mind, time, accidental fit. That excel in wit will own it is very little in a man’s power. That no man can appoint an hour in which he will be witty. The luckiest thoughts such as a man not led to by a regular train. The mind of a witty man the soil in which wit planted grows, but few cultivate. A man, many thoughts in walk, bed, which when he has his pen and paper he cannot recover. Folly of suffering reputation to depend on a repartee which often favours the dull. The first principle of wit out of our power. Scaliger’s genius. The English—Misery of writing without the vein then flowing. The happy have their days, and the unhappy, and the genius the happy, who has flows often and knows their value. The little power men have over their effusions Genius made ancients attribute to impulse.’

The hints here inserted, were indubitably the rudiments of a paper, No. 101, in the Rambler, the concluding paragraph of which is in the following words : ‘ I believe, Mr. Rambler, that it has some time happened to others, who have the good or ill fortune to be celebrated for wits, to fall under the same censures upon the like occasions. I hope, therefore, that you will prevent any misrepresentations of such failures, by remarking, that invention is not wholly at the command of its possessor ; that the power of pleasing is very often obstructed by the desire ; that all expectation lessens surprise, yet, some surprise is necessary to gaiety ; and that those who desire to partake of the pleasure of wit, must contribute to its production, since the mind stagnates without external ventilation ; and that effervescence of the fancy, which flashes into transport, can be raised only by the infusion of dissimilar ideas.’

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the pleasures of the chace, in which he shewed himself a bold rider, for he either leaped, or broke through, many of the hedges that obstructed him. This he did, not because he was eager in the pursuit, but, as he said, to save the trouble of alighting and remounting. He did not derive the pleasure or benefit from riding that many do: it had no tendency to raise his spirits; and he once told me that, in a journey on horseback, he fell asleep. In the exercise of a coach he had great delight; it afforded him the indulgence of indolent postures, and, as I discovered when I have had him in my own, the noise of it assisted his hearing*.

It cannot be supposed but that these indulgences were a great relief to Johnson in his declining years; they, nevertheless, indisposed him for meditation and reflection; and, as he has noted in his diary, assigning for the reason the irregularity of the family, it broke his habit of early rising, which he had persisted in from new-year's day 1765, to about the midsummer following †. It is possible that the family, had they been

* In Dr. Pope's *Wish*, I meet with the following note: 'I have known several who could hear but little in their chambers, but when they were in a coach rattling upon the stones heard very well. I also knew a lady in Essex, whose name was Tyrrel, who, while she had occasion to discourse, used to beat a great drum, without which she could not hear at all; the reason whereof is this; the most frequent cause of deafness is, the relaxation of the tympanum or drum of the ear, which, by this violent and continual agitation of the air, is extended, and made more tight and springy, and better reflects sounds, like a drum new braced.'

† 'March 3. I have never, I thank God, since new year's day, deviated from the practise of rising.

' In

been disposed to it, might with equal truth have complained, that he was little less irregular, and that, if they obliged him to break his resolution of early rising, he often prevented their retiring to rest, at a seasonable hour, that he might not want the gratification of tea.

About this time, Johnson had the honour of a conversation with his majesty, in the library, at the queen's house. Whether the occasion of it was accidental, or otherwise, I have never been informed; but from this account of it, given by him, it afforded him great satisfaction. He spoke to me of the king's behaviour, in terms of the highest gratitude and approbation, and described it as equalling in grace and condescension what might have been expected from Lewis the fourteenth, when the manners of the French court were in the highest state of cultivation. The public are already in possession of the handsome compliment which his majesty made him; I will, nevertheless, give it here a place: he asked Johnson, if he intended to give the world any more of his compositions; Johnson answered, he believed he should not, for that he thought he had written enough; 'I should have thought so too,' replied his majesty, 'if you had not written so well †.'

Johnson

'In this practice I persisted till I went to Mr. Thrale's some time before midsummer: the irregularity of that family broke my habit of rising. I was there till after Michaelmas.'

† Many sayings of princes have been thought worthy of recording. I recollect one, of George the second, which, for the elegance of it, deserves to be remembered. In the rebellion in 1745, Mr. Thornton, a Yorkshire gentleman, raised, at his own expence, a body of horse, and, though but newly married to a beautiful

Johnson was now approaching towards sixty. He was an exact computer of time, and, as his essays abundantly shew, regretted deeply the lapse of those minutes that could not be recalled, and though, in his own judgment of himself, he had been criminal in the waste of it, he was ever resolving to subtract from his sleep those hours which are fittest for study and meditation. Numberless are the resolutions that I meet with in his diaries, for a series of years back, to rise at eight; but he was unable, for any long continuance, to perform them, a weakness, less inexcusable than he thought it, for he was ever a bad sleeper, and was sufficiently sensible of his infirmity, in that respect, to have allayed his scrupulosity, had he not been a most rigorous judge of his actions. To impress the more strongly on his mind the value of time, and the use it behoved every wise man to make of it, he indulged himself in an article of luxury, which, as far as my observation and remembrance will serve me, he never enjoyed till this late period of his life: it was a watch, which he caused to be made for him, in the year 1768, by those eminent artists Mudge and Dutton: it was of metal, and the outer case covered with tortoise-shell; he paid for it seventeen guineas. On the dial-plate thereof, which

beautiful young woman, headed it, and joined the king's army. After the defeat at Culloden, he, with his wife, went to court, where being seen by the king, who had noticed Mrs. Thornton, he was thus accosted by the monarch: 'Mr. Thornton, I have
' been told of the services you have rendered to your country, and
' your attachment to me and my family, and have held myself ob-
' liged to you for both; but I was never able to estimate the degree
' of the obligation till now that I see the lady whom you left
' behind you.'

was

was of enamel, he caused to be inscribed, in the original Greek, these words of our blessed Saviour, *Νυξ γὰρ ἐρχεται* *, but with the mistake of a letter *μ* for *ν*: the meaning of them is, ‘For the night cometh.’ This, though a memento of great importance, he, about three years after, thought pedantic; he, therefore, exchanged the dial-plate for one in which the inscription was omitted.

In the same year, 1768, upon the establishment of the royal academy of painting, sculpture, &c. Johnson was nominated professor of ancient literature, an office merely honorary, and conferred on him, as it is supposed, upon the recommendation of the president, Sir Joshua Reynolds.

In the variety of subjects on which he had exercised his pen, Johnson had hitherto forborne to meddle with the disputes of contending factions, which is all, that, at this day, is to be understood by the word politics. He was ever a friend to government, in a general sense of the term, as knowing what benefits society derives from it; and was never tempted to write on the side of what is called opposition, but at a period of his life, when experience had not enabled him to judge of the motives which induce men to assume the characters of patriots. In the year 1769, he saw with indignation the methods which, in the business of Wilkes, were taken to work upon the populace, and, in 1770, published a pamphlet, intitled, ‘The false alarm,’ wherein he asserts, and labours to shew, by a variety of arguments founded on precedents, that the expulsion of a member of the house of

* John, chap. ix. v. 4.

commons, for such offences as he had been convicted of, was both just and seasonable, and that no such calamity as the subversion of the constitution, was to be feared from an act, that had usage, which is the law of parliament, to warrant it. The non-acquiescence of the people interested in the question, is therefore branded by him with folly and madness, in the following animated expressions:—‘ Every artifice of
 ‘ sedition has been since practised to awaken discon-
 ‘ tent, and inflame indignation. The papers of every
 ‘ day have been filled with the exhortations and me-
 ‘ naces of faction. The madness has spread through
 ‘ all ranks and both sexes; women and children have
 ‘ clamoured for Mr. Wilkes: honest simplicity has
 ‘ been cheated into fury, and only the wise have es-
 ‘ caped the infection.’

To ridicule the conduct of opposition, he adopts a term, invented by the leaders thereof, and calls the conjuncture of events, at the time of which he is speaking, an *alarming crisis*, but endeavours to abate the fears of its termination, by alluding to parliamentary decisions apparently partial, and sometimes oppressive; and shewing, that the vexation excited by injustice, suffered, or supposed to be suffered, by any private man or single community, was local and temporary. This position he illustrates by the following observation: ‘ We have found by experience, that
 ‘ though a squire has given ale and venison in vain,
 ‘ and a borough has been compelled to see its dearest
 ‘ interests in the hands of him whom it did not trust,
 ‘ yet the general state of the nation has continued the
 ‘ same. The sun has risen, and the corn has grown,
 ‘ and whatever talk has been of the danger of pro-
 ‘ perty,

‘ perty, yet he that ploughed the field commonly
 ‘ reaped it, and he that built the house was master of
 ‘ the door.’

In a tone more grave, he addresses such as are capable of conviction, and tells them—that ‘ they have
 ‘ as much happiness as the condition of life will easily
 ‘ receive; and that a government, of which an erroneous, or unjust, representation of one county only,
 ‘ is the greatest crime that interest can discover, or
 ‘ malice can upbraid, is a government approaching
 ‘ nearer to perfection than any that experience has
 ‘ shewn, or history related.’

The pamphlet concludes with some shrewd remarks on the support given to faction by the sectaries, and that frigid neutrality of the tories in this business, which he censures in these words:
 ‘ They do not yet consider that they have at last a
 ‘ king, who knows not the name of a party, and
 ‘ who wishes to be the common father of his
 ‘ people.’

It was not to be imagined, that a publication, so unpopular as this, would long remain unanswered. Of many answers to it, one alone seemed to Johnson worthy of a reply; but, in a consultation with his friends, he was advised to forbear. Had he engaged in a vindication of ‘ The false alarm,’ the world might possibly have been entertained with a specimen of his abilities in controversial writing, in which there is little doubt that he would have displayed the temper and perspicuity of Hooker, the strength of Chillingworth, and the dexterity of Hoadly, though, in truth, he was no friend to controversy; his

his opinion on that subject being, that it seldom produced conviction, that an impotent argument against a book was best refuted by silence, and that it is want of policy to give immortality to that which must of itself expire.

In the next succeeding year, a subject of more general importance to the interests of this country engaged his attention: it was a question between us and the court of Spain, touching the pre-discovery, and, consequently, the right of dominion over certain islands in the South seas, known to us by the name of Pepys's or Falkland's islands, and to the Spaniards by that of the Malouines, spots of earth so inconsiderable, as Johnson asserts, that in the desert of the ocean they had almost escaped human notice; and which, if they had not happened to make a sea-mark, had perhaps never had a name. Lord Anson, in his voyage, had noticed these islands, and the reporter thereof had recommended them as necessary to the success of any future expedition against the coast of Chili, and, of such importance, that the possession of them would produce many advantages in peace; and in war would make us masters of the South sea. In 1748, our ministry sent out a few sloops, for a fuller knowledge of Pepys's and Falkland's islands, and for further discoveries in the South sea; but, upon a remonstrance of Wall, the Spanish ambassador here, maintaining the right of his master to the exclusive dominion of the South sea, they relinquished part of their original design, and our purpose of settling there was disowned. Thus the matter rested, till lord Egmont was appointed to the direction

direction of our naval operations, who, in the year 1765, sent out an expedition, the commander whereof took possession of Falkland's island in the name of his Britannic majesty, and placed a garrison in a place of defence, to which he gave the appellation of Port Egmont. In this settlement, we were soon after disturbed; for Madariaga, a Spanish commodore, with five frigates and a train of artillery, appearing before the island, obliged our people to capitulate, and obtained possession. This event was no sooner known at our court, than hostilities against Spain were resolved on, and a powerful fleet was assembled: these preparations brought on a conference between prince Masserano, the Spanish ambassador here, and our minister, and a subsequent negociation at Madrid, between Mr. Harris our minister there, and the marquis Grimaldi: the result was, a disavowal on the part of Spain of the violent enterprise of Buccarelli, the governor of Buenos Ayres, who had sent the force that dispossessed the English, and a promise to restore the port and fort called Egmont, with all the artillery and stores therein, but with a declaration, that this engagement should not affect the question of the prior right of sovereignty of the Malouine, otherwise called Falkland's islands*.

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* The conference at London was with lord Rochford, then secretary of state for the southern department, who, in discourse with me, gave an account of it to this effect, viz. that he represented to the Spanish ambassador, that the inflexibility of his court in this business had compelled us to arm, that our fleet was manned, and the officers and sailors impatient for action; that the nation having incurred the expence of a naval equipment, would hardly be satisfied without a trial of what it was able to

The acquiescence of our court in these concessions of that of Madrid, and the reference of a disputable question to the Greek calends, furnished the leaders of faction with a new topic for clamour, and war became the cry. The heavy burthen of debt, incurred by the last, was no reason against a new one, and millions were to be expended, and thousands murdered, for the titular sovereignty of an island, which Johnson thus strongly and even poetically characterises:—

‘ A bleak and gloomy solitude, an island thrown
 ‘ aside from human use, stormy in winter, and barren
 ‘ in summer: an island which not the southern sava-
 ‘ ges have dignified with habitation; where a garrison
 ‘ must be kept in a state that contemplates with envy
 ‘ the exiles of Siberia; of which the expence will be
 ‘ perpetual, and the use only occasional, and which,
 ‘ if fortune smile upon our labours, may become a
 ‘ nest of smugglers in peace, and in war the future
 ‘ refuge of buccaniers.’

These are his sentiments respecting the incommo-
 dities of this contested settlement: against the advan-
 tages suggested by the relator of Anson’s expedition,
 whom he represents as having written under the in-
 fluence of a heated imagination, he opposes the fol-
 lowing arguments, founded in true policy and sound
 morality:

‘ That such a settlement may be of use in war, no
 ‘ man that considers its situation will deny. But war
 ‘ is not the whole business of life; it happens but
 effect; and that a refusal of concessions on the part of Spain would
 inevitably bring on a war between the two powers, which, as it
 would be confined to the sea, must prove a short one.

‘ seldom,

‘ seldom, and every man, either good or wise, wishes
 ‘ that its frequency were still less. That conduct
 ‘ which betrays designs of future hostility, if it does
 ‘ not excite violence, will always generate malignity;
 ‘ it must for ever exclude confidence and friendship,
 ‘ and continue a cold and sluggish rivalry, by a fly
 ‘ reciprocation of indirect injuries, without the bra-
 ‘ very of war, or the security of peace.

‘ The advantage of such a settlement in time of
 ‘ peace is, I think, not easily to be proved. For,
 ‘ what use can it have but of a station for contra-
 ‘ band traders, a nursery of fraud, and a receptacle
 ‘ of theft? Narborough, about a century ago, was of
 ‘ opinion, that no advantages could be obtained in voy-
 ‘ ages to the South sea, except by such an armament
 ‘ as, with a sailor’s morality, *might trade by force*. It
 ‘ is well known, that the prohibitions of commerce
 ‘ are, in these countries, to the last degree, rigorous,
 ‘ and that no man, not authorized by the king of
 ‘ Spain, can trade there but by force or stealth.
 ‘ Whatever profit is obtained, must be gained by
 ‘ the violence of rapine, or dexterity of fraud.

‘ Government will not, perhaps, soon arrive at such
 ‘ purity and excellence, but that some connivance at
 ‘ least will be indulged to the triumphant robber and
 ‘ successful cheat. He that brings wealth home, is
 ‘ seldom interrogated by what means it was obtained.
 ‘ This, however, is one of those modes of corruption
 ‘ with which mankind ought always to struggle, and
 ‘ which they may, in time, hope to overcome. There
 ‘ is reason to expect, that as the world is more en-
 ‘ lightened, policy and morality will at last be recon-

‘ ciled, and that nations will learn not to do what
‘ they would not suffer.

‘ But the silent toleration of suspected guilt is a
‘ degree of depravity far below that which openly in-
‘ cites and manifestly protects it. To pardon a pi-
‘ rate may be injurious to mankind; but how much
‘ greater is the crime of opening a port in which all
‘ pirates will be safe? The contraband trader is not
‘ more worthy of protection: if, with Narborough, he
‘ trades by force, he is a pirate; if he trades secretly,
‘ he is only a thief. Those who honestly refuse his
‘ traffic, he hates as obstructors of his profit; and
‘ those with whom he deals he cheats, because he
‘ knows that they dare not complain. He lives with a
‘ heart full of that malignity, which fear of detection
‘ always generates in those who are to defend unjust
‘ acquisitions against lawful authority; and when he
‘ comes home with riches thus acquired, he brings a
‘ mind hardened in evil, too proud for reproof, and
‘ too stupid for reflection; he offends the high by
‘ his insolence, and corrupts the low by his ex-
‘ ample.’

To silence this clamour, to defeat the purposes of a wicked and malevolent faction, to allay the thirst for human blood, and to bring the deluded people to a sense of their true interest, was the aim of Johnson in writing this most judicious pamphlet: he succeeded in his endeavour, the miseries of war were averted, the contractors disappointed, and a few months restored the populace to the use of their understandings.

In a review of the several particulars herein before related, it will appear, that Johnson’s course of life
was

was very uniform. London was a place of residence which he preferred to all others, as affording more intelligence, and better opportunities of conversation than were elsewhere to be found, and he was but little delighted either with rural scenes or manners. Novelty, and variety of occupations, it is true, were objects that engaged his attention, and from these he never failed to extract information. Though born and bred in a city, he well understood both the theory and practice of agriculture, and even the management of a farm: he could describe, with great accuracy, the process of malting; and, had necessity driven him to it, could have thatched a dwelling. Of field recreations, such as hunting, setting, and shooting, he would discourse like a sportsman, though his personal defects rendered him, in a great measure, incapable of deriving pleasure from any such exercises.

But he had taken a very comprehensive view of human life and manners, and, that he was well acquainted with the views and pursuits of all classes and characters of men, his writings abundantly shew. This kind of knowledge he was ever desirous of increasing, even as he advanced in years: to gratify it, he was accessible to all comers, and yielded to the invitations of such of his friends as had residences in the country, to vary his course of living, and pass the pleasanter months of the year in the shades of obscurity.

In these visits, where there were children in the family, he took great delight in examining them as to their progress in learning, or, to make use of a

term almost obsolete, of apposing them*. To this purpose, I once heard him say, that in a visit to Mrs. Percy, who had the care of one of the young princes, at the queen's house, the prince of Wales, being then a child, came into the room, and began to play about; when Johnson, with his usual curiosity, took an opportunity of asking him what books he was reading, and, in particular, enquired as to his knowledge of the Scriptures: the prince, in his answers, gave him great satisfaction; and, as to the last, said, that part of his daily exercises was to read Ostervald. In many families into which he went, the fathers were often desirous of producing their sons to him for his opinion of their parts, and of the proficiency they had

* To appose signifies to put questions. Ingulphus, abbot of Croyland, who was educated in the old school of the abbey of Westminster, relates, that he was frequently examined in this manner by Editha the wife of Edward the confessor:—*‘Vidi ego illam multotiens, cum patrem meum in regis curia morantem adhuc puer inviserem, et sæpius mihi de scholis venienti de literis ac versu meo apponebat, cum occurrerem, et libentissime de grammatica soliditate ad logicam levitatem, qua callebat, declinans, cum argumentorum subtili ligamine me conclusisset, semper tribus aut quatuor nummis per ancillulam numeratis ad regium penu transmisit, et refectum dimisit.’*——Ingulphi historia, inter scriptores post Bedam, edit. Lond. 1596, p. 509. a.

Which passage, Stow in his annals, has thus rendered:

‘I have seen her (saith Ingulphus) then, when being yet but a boy, I came to see my father dwelling in the king's court. And often coming from school, when I met her, she would appose me touching my learning and lesson, and falling from grammar to logicke, wherein she had some knowledge, would subtilly conclude an argument with me, and by a hand-maiden give three or foure peeces of money, and send me unto the place where I should receive some victuals, and so be dismissed.’

made

made at school, which, in frequent instances, came out to be but small. He once told me, that being at the house of a friend, whose son in his school-vacation was come home, the father spoke of this child as a lad of pregnant parts, and said, that he was well versed in the classics, and acquainted with history, in the study whereof he took great delight. Having this information, Johnson, as a test of the young scholar's attainments, put this question to him:—‘At what time did the heathen oracles cease?’—The boy, not in the least daunted, answered:—‘At the dissolution of religious houses.’

By the exercise of such offices as these; by his disposition to encourage children in their learning, and joining admonition to instruction, to exhort them to obedience to their parents and teachers, Johnson rendered himself a welcome guest in all the families into which he was admitted, and, in various ways, did he employ his talents in the gratification of his friends. A gentleman, with whom he had maintained a long and strict friendship, had the misfortune to lose his wife, and wished Johnson, from the outlines of her character, which he should give him, and his own knowledge of her worth, to compose a monumental inscription for her: he returned the husband thanks for the confidence he placed in him, and acquitted himself of the task in the following fine eulogium, now to be seen in the parish church of Watford in Hertfordshire;

In the vault below are deposited the remains of
 JANE BELL, wife of JOHN BELL, Esq;
 who, in the fifty-third year of her age,
 furrounded with many worldly blessings,
 heard, with fortitude and composure truly great,
 the horrible malady, which had for some time begun to
 afflict her,
 pronounced incurable;
 and for more than three years,
 endured with patience and concealed with decency,
 the daily tortures of gradual death;
 continued to divide the hours not allotted to devotion,
 between the cares of her family, and the converse of
 her friends;
 rewarded the attendance of duty,
 and acknowledged the offices of affection;
 and while she endeavoured to alleviate by chearfulness,
 her husband's sufferings and sorrows,
 increased them by her gratitude for his care,
 and her sollicitude for his quiet.

To the memory of these virtues,
 more highly honoured as more familiarly known,
 this monument is erected by
 JOHN BELL*.

He had long been solicited by Mr. James Boswell,
 a native of Scotland, and one that highly valued him,
 to accompany him in a journey to the Hebrides, or
 Western islands of that kingdom, as to a part of the
 world in which nature was to be viewed in her rudest
 and most terrific form; and where, whatever was

* She died in the month of October, 1771.

wanting to delight the eye, or soothe the imagination, was made up by objects that could not fail to expand it, and turn delight into astonishment; and being now, in the year 1773, his own master, having no literary engagement to fulfil, he accepted the invitation. He began the tour proposed, in the autumn of the year above-mentioned, and, computing from the eighteenth day of August, when he left Edinburgh, to the ninth of November, when he returned thither, completed it in seven weeks and six days; and, at his return to England, drew up and published an account of it.

The Western islands of Scotland are called by the ancient geographers, the Æbudæ and Hebrides. The Scotch historians, namely, Hector Boethius, bishop Lesly, Buchanan, and Johnson, have given us little more concerning them than their names. Camden has given a general, but brief description of them, and speaks of their number as about forty-four; but bishop Gibson adds, that they have been reckoned at three hundred, in which computation every spot or islet must be supposed to be included: but a particular description of the Western islands was wanting to the world till the year 1703, when a person of the name of Martin, published a book with that title, containing a full account of those islands, and of the government, religion, and customs of the inhabitants thereof; and also, ‘of the second sight or faculty of fore-seeing things by vision, so common among them.’

Of this writer little more is known, than that of which himself seems to be the relator, viz. that he was born in one of the most *spacious* and *fertile* isles
in

in the west of Scotland; and, besides his liberal education at the university, had the advantage of seeing foreign places, and conversing with some of the royal society; but who, nevertheless, seems to have been a very weak, credulous, and superstitious man, and, notwithstanding his liberal education, with respect both to matter and form, an injudicious writer. The same person had a few years before made a voyage to St. Kilda, the most remote of the Western islands, and, in 1698, published a description thereof.

The defects of Martin, in the accounts given by him of the Hebrides, and the inhabitants of the several isles so called, are amply supplied by a late traveller thither, Mr. Pennant, who, in the years 1769 and 1772 made the tour of Scotland, and, with a curious and penetrating eye remarked all that seems to have been worthy of notice, respecting either the situation of the spots by him described, or the people whom necessity has doomed, or particular circumstances have led, to become dwellers there.

The extent of these islands, from north to south, is computed at two hundred miles, and their medium width such as, were they one continent, would make a country as large as Scotland. Of the inhabitants, those of St. Kilda for instance, some are Christians, resembling, both in their religious tenets and the purity of their lives, those of the primitive times; others are of the Romish communion, and the rest are of that denomination of protestants, who adhere to the reformation of that furious bigot John Knox. The civil constitution of these several tracts of land, for countries they are not to be called, is uniform:
it

it is feudatory, and of this the many castles and places of defence, every where visible among them, in which their lords and chieftains reside, are evident proofs. In extent of land they differ greatly: Sky, the largest of them, is above sixty measured miles long; but, the greater number of them are less than four miles in length, and two in breadth. Iona, or Icolmkill, is but two miles long and one broad, yet, it was once an episcopal seat, and had on it a cathedral and a place of sepulture, in which no fewer than forty-eight Scottish, eight Norwegian, and four Irish kings, are interred; and also, two monastic establishments, the one for men, the other for women: the ruins of these edifices are yet remaining, and may be seen, accurately delineated, in Mr. Pennant's 'Tour in Scotland, and Voyage to the Hebrides,' made in 1772, and published in 1774. Others of these isles are yet smaller: Cannay is three miles by one, and Staffa is a mile long, and half a mile broad, and has but one house.

The situation of these islands, in the bosom of the deep, exposed to howling winds, and beating waves that excavate their very foundations, and rains whose intermission is little more than casual, together with the inconveniences of an excision from the continent, is a circumstance so much against them, as to deprive the inhabitants of many of the greatest social comforts, and the possibility of subsisting under the want of them is hardly conceivable. It is true, that in some of the islands, nearest the continent, the necessities, and some of the luxuries, of life are attainable, by a communication with the nearest shore; but extreme indigence is the lot of all the islanders, excepting their chieftains

chieftains, and the proprietors of land held in feudal subjection immediately under them. In the subordinate ranks, the condition of the people is so forlorn and destitute, that, were it not that they are as virtuous and innocent as they are poor, they must be deemed the most wretched inhabitants of the earth*.

The

* Martin, a writer, that in mere matters of fact may be trusted, in his voyage to St. Kilda relates a variety of particulars respecting that island and the inhabitants thereof. Of the island he says, that it is two miles long, one broad, and five in circumference, and is one hard rock, with earth from six inches to three foot deep; but with not a tree, nor even a shrub thereon. Of the inhabitants, and their manner of living, he gives a description, which, being abridged, has furnished the following account. They are computed at about one hundred and eighty: they observe the christian Sabbath, and believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and have three chapels covered with thatch, and in one of them a brazen crucifix, on which they swear, and contract matrimony: they speak the Erse language, are charitable to each other, and shew great humanity to shipwrecked strangers. The head of the Mac-Leod family is the proprietor of the island, who governs it by his steward. Though they have sheep and a few oxen, their chief food is Solan geese and their eggs, both which they come at by climbing the rocks at the peril of their lives: to take them they are suspended from the precipices by ropes of an immense length, covered with salted cow-hides, of which there are only three on the island, which are the joint property of all the dwellers thereon. When they climb the rocks, it is with their elbows, their backs being to the rock. The dress of the women is partly linen, and partly plaid: they wear shoes only in winter, and those the skins of the neck of the Solan goose; that part which covers the head of the fowl serving for the heel. Their bread is made of barley or oats, and their drink water or whey. They have only one steel and tinder-box on the whole island, and that is private property. The women are beautiful and innocent, and the inhabitants in general courteous: their ordinary form of salutation, ‘God save you.’ In common with the people of the
northern

The circumstances of discrimination between these people and the rest of mankind, are so many, and their characters, by consequence, so different, their manners and customs so singular, and their mode of life so inconsistent with all that can be conceived, even in the lowest degree of civilization, that we are not to seek for

northern regions, they have a vein of poetry, that is to say, a faculty in rhyming, and are lovers of music and dancing, but know no instrument save the jews' harp.

The same author, in his latter publication, 'The description of the Western isles,' gives a pleasant account of an inhabitant of St. Kilda, who, being prevailed on to accompany some traders to Glasgow, was astonished at the length of the voyage, and the prospect of that city. His relation is as follows:

' Upon his arrival at Glasgow, he was like one that had dropped from the clouds into a new world, whose language, habit, &c. were, in all respects, new to him: he never imagined that such big houses of stone were made with hands; and, for the pavements of the streets, he thought it must needs be altogether natural; for he could not believe that men would be at the pains to beat stones into the ground to walk upon. He stood dumb at the door of his lodging with the greatest admiration; and, when he saw a coach and two horses, he thought it to be a little house they were drawing at their tail with men in it; but he condemned the coachman for a fool to sit so uneasy, for he thought it safer to sit on the horse's back. The mechanism of the coach-wheel, and its running about, was the greatest of all his wonders.

' When he went through the streets, he desired to have one to lead him by the hand. Thomas Ross a merchant, and others, that took the diversion to carry him through the town, asked his opinion of the high church. He answered, that it was a large rock, yet, there were some in St. Kilda much higher, but that these were the best caves he ever saw; for that was the idea which he conceived of the pillars and arches upon which the church stands. When they carried him into the church, he was yet more surprised, and held up his hands with admiration, wondering how it was possible for men to build such a prodigious fabric,

for the motives which, at different times, have induced travellers to visit them.

The islands which Johnson and his friend saw, though few in comparison with the whole number,

‘ fabric, which he supposed to be the largest in the universe. He
 ‘ could not imagine what the pews were designed for, and he
 ‘ fancied the people that wore masks, (not knowing whether they
 ‘ were men or women) had been guilty of some ill thing, for
 ‘ which they dared not shew their faces. He was amazed at
 ‘ women’s wearing patches, and fancied them to have been blis-
 ‘ ters. Pendants seemed to him the most ridiculous of all things :
 ‘ he condemned perriwigs mightily, and much more the powder
 ‘ used in them : in fine, he condemned all things as superfluous he
 ‘ saw not in his own country. He looked with amazement on
 ‘ every thing that was new to him. When he heard the church
 ‘ bells ring, he was under a mighty consternation, as if the fabric
 ‘ of the world had been in great disorder. He did not think
 ‘ there had been so many people in the world as in the city of
 ‘ Glasgow ; and it was a great mystery to him to think what they
 ‘ could all design by living so many in one place. He wondered
 ‘ how they could all be furnished with provision ; and when he
 ‘ saw big loaves, he could not tell whether they were bread,
 ‘ stone, or wood. He was amazed to think how they could be
 ‘ provided with ale, for he never saw any there that drank water.
 ‘ He wondered how they made them fine cloaths ; and to see
 ‘ stockings made without being first cut, and afterwards sewn, was
 ‘ no small wonder to him. He thought it foolish in women to
 ‘ wear thin silks, as being a very improper habit for such as pre-
 ‘ tended to any sort of employment. When he saw the womens’
 ‘ feet, he judged them to be of another shape than those of the
 ‘ men, because of the different shape of their shoes. He did not
 ‘ approve of the heels of shoes worn by men or women ; and,
 ‘ when he observed horses with shoes on their feet, and fastened
 ‘ with iron nails, he could not forbear laughing, and thought it
 ‘ the most ridiculous thing that ever fell under his observation.
 ‘ He longed to see his native country again, and passionately
 ‘ wished it were blessed with ale, brandy, tobacco and iron, as
 ‘ Glasgow was.’

were

were some of the most considerable of the Hebrides; and his manner of describing them and the inhabitants, as also, his reception, is entertaining; but it is not enough particular to render it intelligible to a stranger. In the relation of historical facts, and local circumstances, Johnson delighted not: whatever intelligence came in his way, furnished him with matter for reflection, and his book is rather a disquisition on Hebridian manners, than such a description of the islands and the people as it was in his power to give.

As an instance of Johnson's inattention to historical facts, let me mention his account of Icolmkill*, called also Iona, which, though introduced by a sentiment that is admired for its piety and pathos of expression, is so abrupt, as to displease. He calls it that illustrious island which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge, and the blessings of religion; but who can read thus much, concerning a spot so dignified, without wishing, that the author had mentioned a few of those historical particulars, on which his reflections are founded? He might have told us from Bede, that the island takes its name from Columb, an abbot, who, about

* Martin says, that the word *Kill* in the Irish or Erse language signifies a church; if then we reject the preposition *I*, and call it Columkill, we seem to have an intelligible name for it, i. e. Columb's church island. He farther relates, that the churches and the monastery were, by the kings of Scotland, endowed with revenues to the amount of 4000 marks a year. But, whoever wishes for satisfaction in this, and many other particulars respecting this island, will receive it in the perusal of Mr. Pennant's Voyage to the Hebrides.

the year 565, came from Ireland, and preached the Gospel to the northern Picts, and was called the apostle of the Picts, and that Melifchen their king, being converted to the faith of Christ, gave the abbot the isle of Iona, by Bede called Hy or Hu, who built two churches thereon, in one whereof he is interred, and also a monastery.

Bede flourished about 734, and may be said to speak from recent authority. Bishop Gibson has recognised his account, and adds, that in a little village here, or hereabout, named Sodor, or, as others call it, Soa, a bishop's see was erected, from which all the adjacent isles, including Iona, took the name of Sodorenses: the jurisdiction thereof, he elsewhere says, was given to the bishop of the isle of Man, and hence arises the compound appellative, bishop of Sodor and Man. In the first of these particulars, he, however, stands corrected in a relation cited by Mr. Penant, and founded on good authority, purporting, that during the time that the Norwegians were in possession of the isles, they divided them into two parts; the northern, which comprehended all that lay to the north of a certain promontory, and were, therefore, called the Norderys; and the southern, which were those that lay to the south thereof, and were, for a similar reason, called the Suderys. Voyage to the Hebrides, 257.

I have some reason to think that, in writing the account of his journey to the Western islands, Johnson had in his eye one of the most delightful books of the like kind in our language, 'Maundrell's journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem.' The motives that induced him to undertake a labour so formidable to a man

man of his age, as his tour must be thought, I will not enquire into: doubtless, curiosity was one of them; but, it was curiosity directed to no peculiar object. He was neither an antiquary nor a naturalist; he had little acquaintance with the treasures which lie below the surface of the earth; and for the study of botany he never discovered the least relish. If any particular subject may be said to have engaged his attention, it must have been the manners of a people of whom he knew little but by report, the knowledge whereof might furnish him with new topics for reflection and disquisition, an exercise of his mental powers which, of all others, he most delighted in. That in this employment he has conducted himself with that impartiality which becomes a lover of truth, the natives of the kingdom he visited deny; and, that he carried out of this country the temper of a man who hoped for an hospitable reception among strangers, few are so hardy as to assert. Accordingly, we find in his narrative an intermixture, not only of praise and blame, but of gratitude and invective.

The volume which this tour gave birth to may properly be called a dissertation, for it has scarcely any facts, and consists chiefly in propositions which he hunts down, and enlivens with amusing disquisition. As he says himself, on another occasion, the negative catalogue of particulars is very copious: what he did not see, what he could not learn, what he would not believe, what he did not enquire about, and what he is not sure of, altogether form a considerable enumeration. Yet the merit of this tract is great; for, though I will admit that no one going his route could derive from him direction or intelligence; though no remembrance

could be refreshed, nor remarks corroborated; because his web was spun, not from objects that presented themselves to his view, but from his own pre-existent ideas; I am convinced, that every body must have regretted the omission, had he, for any reason, withheld so entertaining a series of reflections.

A reference to the work will discover both the cause and effect of the confined observation that must be remarked in it: he professes his views to be directed to life and manners: of the former, if taken in its general sense, he could obtain a very inadequate knowledge who was entertained by the opulent, at the best houses, with the best fare of the country, and who, while he suffered no inconvenience within doors, enquired after little without; and, of the latter he could gain little information, for the manners he most closely observed were imported from the places where southern elegance is taught. His known love of ease precluded him from intelligence: all deficiencies by which he could suffer, the natural hospitality of those to whom he was a guest, temporarily supplied or concealed, and happy was it for him that he found not the same prejudices that he carried with him.

In all Johnson's disquisitions, whether argumentative or critical, there is a certain even-handed justice that leaves the mind in a strange perplexity. When he speaks of the paucity of trees in Scotland, his indignation seems excited at the supineness it manifested. He says — 'to drop a seed into the ground can cost
' nothing, and the trouble is not great of protecting
' the young plant till it is out of danger.' — In this the reader willingly acquiesces, and wonders, with
Johnson,

Johnson, that plantation is neglected, till he is told in the conclusion of the paragraph, that it must be allowed difficult, where there is neither wood for palisades, nor thorns for hedges. He again, in a subsequent page, resumes the same kind of satirical admiration, which he balances by observing, that the land which covers future forests cannot be arable. This also is satisfactory: the question of first importance certainly is—Where shall *corn* grow?—no one will deny, that food must be secured, before the delights of foliage, or the emoluments of timber are thought of. But all our wonder and regret at national inactivity, is dissipated, when we are told, that Sir James Macdonald had made an experiment by planting several millions of trees, which the want of fences to keep the cattle off, had rendered abortive. Thus it is that he frequently raises an edifice, which appears founded and supported to resist any attack; and then, with the next stroke, annihilates it, and leaves the vacancy he found.

With respect to the inaccuracy he has been charged with, it must, in justice, be imputed to the defect of his perceptions: he neither saw nor heard clearly; and, though this might be urged against his attempting to relate what he had met with or been told, it must be admitted in excuse for any misrepresentation; since no one could acquire credit by doubting the uniform veracity of Johnson. He candidly confesses his inability, whenever he suspected it; and owns, that his thoughts are the thoughts of one who has seen little.

I wish I could as readily apologize for the manner in which he speaks of the people of that part of Scot-

land he visited. He seems to think a barren soil disgraceful to the proprietors; and his aversion is most excited, where he finds the comforts of life most sparingly bestowed: where he meets with refinement, he is placid, and is unwilling to depart from elegance; but, when he is displeased, or unsatisfied, he expresses himself with a keenness of satire, which, however it may delight by its poignancy, is not to be justified; and I have reason to think very highly, not only of the kindness which consulted his humour, but of that temper and forbearance which restrained those persons who, while they were endeavouring to gratify him, received indubitable proof of his antipathy to their country.

But it is due to him to take notice, that in civility he has preserved the same equilibrium as in argument. If he has stigmatized Scotland as a country, and the Scots as a people, his compliments to individuals, in some measure atone for it: they are judicious, elegant, and well conceived, and express the sense of gratitude proportioned to the favours he experienced.

I will not repeat, for I do not wish to perpetuate, those passages that have given disgust. I have ever esteemed the Scots as a brave, useful, and virtuous people, and should be very sorry if they imagined Johnson's prejudices common to their southern neighbours. If, in his journey across their continent, he had remembered, that a very commendable and well-directed spirit of literary industry had distinguished them, and, when among the Hebridians, that a perpetual struggle against difficulties, and a patient toleration of irremediable evils, is eminently
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laudable,

laudable, I am persuaded he would have written with less asperity, and that his remarks would not have given that offence which I cannot but own well founded.

It is no less to be lamented, that he left not behind him those prejudices against the ecclesiastical establishment of Scotland and the religious persuasion of the people, which, though in England they gave little offence, could not, in that kingdom, be indulged without the suspicion of bigotry. It is pretty well agreed that, between the church of England and that of Scotland, the questions in dispute relate not to doctrines, but to discipline, which, in the judgment of many sober persons, is numbered among things indifferent. Being in a country of which Christianity, in its utmost purity, is the religion, it might have been expected, that Johnson, with a true catholic spirit, and as a testimony of respect for their teachers, would occasionally have been present at divine service in their churches; but his narrative contains not the least hint of any such compliance, though he has noted his joining in public worship at the English non-juring episcopal chapel at Aberdeen*.

From a tour to which he had no stronger an incentive, from which he was so little able to extract pleasure, and which had occasioned a suspension of the enjoyments he found in a metropolis, it seems at first wonderful, that he should have returned satisfied:

* For this condescension he would have had the example of Mr. Richard Baxter, a man whom he professed to admire, who, as I have been credibly informed, to testify his charity towards those from whom he dissented in opinion, was wont, once in every year, to communicate with the established church.

that he did so is certain; and it must be attributed to the gratification he felt in the respect that had been paid to him, in seeing the celebrity he had acquired, and in increasing the stock of his ideas.

Had Johnson been more explicit in his acknowledgments of the hospitable and courteous treatment he experienced from a people, who had reason to look on him rather as a spy than a traveller, and might have said to him—‘To discover the nakedness of the land are ye come,’—he would have given a proof, that he had, in some degree, overcome his prejudices against them and their country; but they seemed to be unconquerable.

One of the last duties we learn, is that of considering mankind as one great family, and the natives of foreign countries, however differing from us in opinions, manners, customs, and other particulars, as standing in the same relation with ourselves to the common Father of us all: a duty which leads us, as Thompson elegantly expresses it, to

‘—— scan our nature with a brother’s eye.’

Johnson’s prejudices were too strong to permit him to extend his philanthropy much beyond the limits of his native country, and the pale of his own church; and, that he was unable to conquer his habits of thinking and judging, is the only apology that can be offered for his asperity towards the people whose country and manners he, in his journey above spoken of, has taken upon him to describe; or that he has forborne to display any such generous sentiments respecting the inhabitants of Scotland as others have done who have visited that country.

In

In the close of his book he might have at large expressed some sense of gratitude for the many courtesies that had been shewn him. He might at least have said, ‘the barbarous people shewed us much kindness;’ but the last paragraph is frigid and unanimated to an excess of affectation, and must ever suffer by a comparison with the conclusion of Mr. Pennant’s Tour, which, as well for its elegance, as the benevolent spirit which it evidences, I here insert.

‘ I look back to the North, and with a grateful
 ‘ mind acknowledge every benefit I received, from
 ‘ the remotest of the Hebrides to the present spot ;
 ‘ whether I think of the hospitality of the rich, or
 ‘ the efforts of unblameable poverty, straining every
 ‘ nerve to accommodate me, amidst dreary hills and
 ‘ ungenial skies. The little accidents of diet or of
 ‘ lodging, affect not me : I look farther than the
 ‘ mere differences of living or of customs, to the
 ‘ good heart, and extensive benevolence, which
 ‘ softens every hardship, and turns into delicacies
 ‘ the grossest fare. My constitution never yet was
 ‘ disposed to apathy, for which I can claim no merit,
 ‘ but am thankful to the author of my frame.’——

And, in a quotation from the Religio Medici of Sir Thomas Brown, he adds :——“ I feel not in myself
 “ those common antipathies that I can discover in
 “ others : those national repugnancies do not touch
 “ me ; nor do I behold with prejudice the French,
 “ Italian, Spaniard, or Dutch, much more my fellow-
 “ subjects, howsoever remotely placed from me. But,
 “ where I find their actions in balance with my coun-
 “ trymen’s, I honour, love, and embrace them in

“ some degree. I was born in the right climate, but
 “ seem to be framed and constellated unto all : all
 “ places, all airs, make unto me one country ; I
 “ am in England every where and under every me-
 “ ridian.”

I must here observe, as it was a circumstance that gave him some trouble after his return to England, that during his stay in the Hebrides, Johnson was very industrious in his enquiries touching the Earse language, with a view to ascertain the degree of credit due to certain poems then lately published and ascribed to Ossian, an ancient bard, who, till then, had scarce been heard of. His opinion, upon the question of their genuineness, is pretty decisive, and will appear best in his own words.

‘ I suppose my opinion of the poems of Ossian is
 ‘ already discovered. I believe they never existed
 ‘ in any other form than that which we have seen.
 ‘ The editor, or author, never could shew the ori-
 ‘ ginal * ; nor can it be shewn by any other. To re-
 ‘ venge reasonable incredulity by refusing evidence,
 ‘ is a degree of insolence with which the world is not
 ‘ yet acquainted ; and stubborn audacity is the last
 ‘ refuge of guilt. It would be easy to shew it, if he
 ‘ had it ; but whence could it be had ? It is too long
 ‘ to be remembered, and the language formerly had
 ‘ nothing written. He has doubtless inserted names
 ‘ that circulate in popular stories, and may have trans-
 ‘ lated some wandering ballads, if any can be found ;
 ‘ and the names, and some of the images, being re-

* Johnson had required, that it should be deposited in either the king’s or the marischal college at Aberdeen, and submitted to public inspection ; but this was never done.

‘ collected, make an inaccurate auditor imagine, by
‘ the help of Caledonian bigotry, that he has formerly
‘ heard the whole.

‘ I asked a very learned minister in Sky, who had used
‘ all arts to make me believe the genuineness of the
‘ book, whether at last he believed it himself; but he
‘ would not answer. He wished me to be deceived,
‘ for the honour of his country; but would not directly
‘ and formally deceive me. Yet, has this man’s testi-
‘ mony been publicly produced, as of one that held
‘ Fingal to be the work of Ossian.

‘ It is said, that some men of integrity profess to
‘ have heard parts of it, but they all heard them when
‘ they were boys; and it was never said, that any of
‘ them could recite six lines. They remember
‘ names, and, perhaps, some proverbial sentiments;
‘ and, having no distinct ideas, coin a resemblance
‘ without an original. The persuasion of the Scots,
‘ however, is far from universal; and, in a question so
‘ capable of proof, why should doubt be suffered to
‘ continue? The editor has been heard to say, that
‘ part of the poem was received by him, in the
‘ Saxon character. He has then found, by some
‘ peculiar fortune, an unwritten language, written
‘ in a character which the natives probably never be-
‘ held.

‘ I have yet supposed no imposture, but in the
‘ publisher; yet, I am far from certainty, that some
‘ translations have not been lately made, that may
‘ now be obtruded as parts of the original work.
‘ Credulity on one part is a strong temptation to de-
‘ ceit on the other, especially to deceit of which no
‘ personal injury is the consequence, and which flat-
‘ ters

‘ ters the author with his own ingenuity. The Scots
 ‘ have something to plead for their easy reception of
 ‘ an improbable fiction: they are seduced by their
 ‘ fondness for their supposed ancestors. A Scotch-
 ‘ man must be a very sturdy moralist, who does not
 ‘ love Scotland better than truth; he will always
 ‘ love it better than inquiry: and, if falshood flatters
 ‘ his vanity, will not be very diligent to detect it.
 ‘ Neither ought the English to be much influenced
 ‘ by Scotch authority; for of the past and present
 ‘ state of the whole Earse nation, the Lowlanders are,
 ‘ at least, as ignorant as ourselves. To be ignorant
 ‘ is painful; but it is dangerous to quiet our unea-
 ‘ siness by the delusive opiate of hasty persuasion.

‘ But this is the age in which those who could not
 ‘ read, have been supposed to write; in which the
 ‘ giants of antiquated romance have been exhibited
 ‘ as realities. If we know little of the ancient High-
 ‘ landers, let us not fill the vacuity with Ossian. If
 ‘ we have not searched the Magellanick regions, let
 ‘ us, however, forbear to people them with Pata-
 ‘ gons.’

No sooner did this strong and unequivocal de-
 claration of Johnson’s opinion of the poems of
 Ossian appear, than Mr. James Macpherson, the
 publisher of them, not only repelled the charge of
 forgery therein contained, but, in a letter to the author
 of it, threatened him with corporal chastisement. If
 Mr. Macpherson had known his man, he would pro-
 bably have forborne the thought of such a revenge.
 To shew his contempt of him and all that he was
 able to do that could hurt him, Johnson returned the
 following brief but spirited answer:

‘ Mr. JAMES MACPHERSON, No date.

‘ I received your foolish and impudent letter.—
 ‘ Any violence that shall be attempted upon me, I
 ‘ will do my best to repel ; and what I cannot do for
 ‘ myself, the law shall do for me ; for I will not be
 ‘ hindered from exposing what I think a cheat, by
 ‘ the menaces of a ruffian. What would you have
 ‘ me retract ? I thought your work an imposition ;
 ‘ I think so still ; and, for my opinion, I have given
 ‘ reasons which I here dare you to refute.—Your
 ‘ abilities, since your Homer, are not so formidable ;
 ‘ and, what I hear of your morality, inclines me to
 ‘ credit rather what you shall prove, than what you
 ‘ shall say.’

Whether Johnson was apprehensive that his adversary would put his threat in execution, or that he meant to shew all who came to see him, that he stood upon his guard, he provided himself with a weapon, both of the defensive and offensive kind. It was an oak-plant of a tremendous size ; a plant, I say, and not a shoot or branch, for it had had a root, which being trimmed to the size of a large orange, became the head of it. Its height was upwards of six feet, and from about an inch in diameter at the lower end, increased to near three : this he kept in his bed-chamber, so near the chair in which he constantly sat, as to be within reach.

But this precaution for his defence turned out to be unnecessary. Johnson’s letter, above inserted, put an end to the dispute between him and Macpherson ; but, by other persons, it was continued with a degree of asperity equal to that which was shewn in the controversy

troverſy concerning the genuinenefs of Phalaris's epiftles, and with as much acutenefs as that which tended to afcertain the queſtion, whether the poems lately aſcribed to Rowlie are not forgeries. Moderators have alſo interpoſed, as there did in the diſpute about the authenticity of the Sybilline oracles, and with as little ſucceſs: the world remains, and is likely ever to remain, without ſatisfaction in reſpect of either the one or the other.

Before this time, Johnſon had undertaken to reviſe the former edition of his Shakeſpeare, and extend his plan, by admitting the corrections and illustrations of various other commentators. He therefore, in conjunction with Mr. George Steevens, publiſhed in 1773, a new edition of that author, in ten octavo volumes, which was republiſhed with additions in 1778.

In 1774, the parliament having been diſſolved, and Mr. Wilkes perſiſting in his endeavours to become a representative in that which was about to be choſen, Johnſon addreſſed to the electors of Great Britain a pamphlet, entitled 'The Patriot;' the deſign whereof is to guard them from impoſition, and teach them to diſtinguiſh that which, of itſelf ſeems ſufficiently obvious, the difference between true and falſe patriotiſm; but the madneſs of the people was then at its height, and they needed to be told how often in their lucid intervals they had lamented the deceits practiſed on them by artful and deſigning men. With this view, he deſcribes a patriot, as one whoſe public conduct is regulated by one ſingle motive, the love of his country; who, as an agent in parliament, has, for himſelf, neither hope nor fear, neither kindneſs nor reſentment, but refers every thing

thing to the common interest. These, and other marks of patriotism by him pointed out, he allows to be such as artifice may counterfeit, or folly misapply; but he enumerates several characteristical modes of speaking and acting, which may prove a man not to be a patriot; which discrimination he illustrates in fundry instances, by pointed references to the conduct of many of those men who were courting the favour of the people: these, an abridgment would injure, and I therefore give them in his own words: ‘It may safely be pronounced, that
 ‘ those men are no patriots, who, when the national honour was vindicated in the fight of Europe,
 ‘ and the Spaniards having invaded what they call
 ‘ their own, had shrunk to a disavowal of their attempt, and a relaxation of their claim, would still
 ‘ have instigated us to a war for a bleak and barren
 ‘ spot in the Magellanic ocean, of which no use could
 ‘ be made, unless it were a place of exile for the hypocrites of patriotism.—He that wishes to see
 ‘ his country robbed of its rights, cannot be a patriot. That man, therefore, is no patriot, who
 ‘ justifies the ridiculous claims of American usurpation; who endeavours to deprive the nation of
 ‘ its natural and lawful authority over its own colonies, those colonies which were settled under English protection, were constituted by an English charter, and have been defended by English arms. To
 ‘ suppose, that, by sending out a colony, the nation
 ‘ established an independent power; that when, by
 ‘ indulgence and favour, emigrants are become rich,
 ‘ they shall not contribute to their own defence, but
 ‘ at their own pleasure, and that they shall not be
 ‘ included,

‘ included, like millions of their fellow-subjects, in
 ‘ the general system of representation, involves such
 ‘ an accumulation of absurdity, as nothing but the
 ‘ shew of patriotism would palliate.’——His last designation of the class of men whom he means to stigmatise, is the following :—‘ That man is not a patriot, who denies his governors their due praise,
 ‘ and who conceals from the public the benefits which
 ‘ they receive. Those, therefore, can lay no claim
 ‘ to this illustrious appellation, who impute want of
 ‘ public spirit to the late parliament ; an assembly of
 ‘ men, whom, notwithstanding some fluctuations of
 ‘ counsel, and some weakness of agency, the nation
 ‘ must always remember with gratitude, since it is
 ‘ indebted to them for a very ample concession in the
 ‘ resignation of protections, and a wise and honest
 ‘ attempt to improve the constitution, in the new judicature instituted to try elections.’

Johnson published also in 1775, a pamphlet intitled, ‘ Taxation no Tyranny,’ an answer to the resolutions and address of the American congress ; in which, as the ground of his argument, he assumes as self-evident, the following proposition : ‘ In all the
 ‘ parts of human knowledge, whether terminating in
 ‘ science merely speculative, or operating upon life
 ‘ private or civil, are admitted some fundamental
 ‘ principles, or common axioms, which, being generally received, are little doubted, and being little
 ‘ doubted, have been rarely proved.

‘ Of these gratuitous and acknowledged truths,
 ‘ it is often the fate to become less evident by endeavours to explain them, however necessary such
 ‘ endeavours may be made by the misapprehensions
 ‘ of

' of absurdity, or the sophistries of interest. It is
 ' difficult to prove the principles of science, because
 ' notions cannot always be found more intelligible
 ' than those which are questioned. It is difficult to
 ' prove the principles of practice, because they have,
 ' for the most part, not been discovered by investi-
 ' gation, but obtruded by experience; and the de-
 ' monstrator will find, after an operose deduction, that
 ' he has been trying to make that seen, which can
 ' be only felt.

' Of this kind is the position that *the supreme power*
 ' *of every community has the right of requiring from all*
 ' *its subjects, such contributions as are necessary to the*
 ' *public safety or public prosperity*, which was confi-
 ' dered by all mankind as comprising the primary
 ' and essential condition of all political society, till
 ' it became disputed by those zealots of anarchy,
 ' who have denied to the parliament of Britain the
 ' right of taxing the American colonies.'

With much wit does he ridicule, and with force of
 reasoning refute, the arguments founded on the in-
 ability of the Americans to bear taxation, their powers
 of resistance, the stubbornness of their tempers, and the
 profits accruing to this country by its commerce with
 them: these, he tells us, are used only as auxiliaries to
 that other, which, as he briefly states it, is — ' that to
 ' tax the colonies is usurpation and oppression, an in-
 ' vasion of natural and legal rights, and a violation
 ' of those principles which support the constitution of
 ' the English government.

He next considers the legal consequences of migra-
 tion from a mother-country, and afterwards proceeds
 to an examination of that fallacious position, that from
 an

an Englishman nothing can be taken but by his own consent, and of the argument grounded thereon, that the Americans, being unrepresented in parliament, cannot be said to have consented in their corporate capacity, and that, refusing their consent as individuals, they cannot legally be taxed.

Of this he says, that ‘ it is a position of a mighty
‘ found, but that every man that utters it, with what-
‘ ever confidence, and every man that hears it, with
‘ whatever acquiescence, if consent be supposed to
‘ imply the power of refusal, feels to be false, for that,
‘ in wide extended dominions, the business of the pub-
‘ lic must be done by delegation, and the choice of
‘ delegates is by a select number of electors, who are
‘ often far from unanimity in their choice ; and where
‘ the numbers approach to equality, almost half must
‘ be governed, not only without, but against their
‘ choice.’ Of those, who are not electors, he says :---
‘ they stand idle and helpless spectators of the common-
‘ weal, wholly unconcerned in the government of them-
‘ selves.’ The resolution of the Congress, that their an-
cestors, who first settled the colonies, were, at the time
of their emigration from the mother-country, entitled
to all the rights, liberties, and immunities of free and
natural-born subjects within the realm of England, he
admits ; but granting it, he contends, that their boast
of original rights is at an end, and that, by their emi-
gration, they sunk down into colonists, governed by a
charter ; and that though, by such emigration, they
had not forfeited, surrendered, or lost, any of those
rights, they had lost them by natural effects, that is to
say, had abandoned them.—‘ A man,’ says he, ‘ can
‘ be but in one place at once ; he cannot have the ad-
‘ vantages

‘ advantages of multiplied residence. He that will enjoy the brightness of sunshine, must quit the coolness of the shade. And though an emigrant, having a right to vote for a knight or burghers, by crossing the Atlantic does not nullify that right, he renders the exertion of it no longer possible.—But the privileges of an American,’ adds he, ‘ scorn the limits of place ; they are part of himself, and cannot be lost by departure from his country ; they float in the air, or glide under the ocean.’

He next considers the legal operation of charters, and forgets not to note, that from the exemption of the first settlers in Massachusetts bay from taxes for seven years, it must be inferred, that at the end thereof they were liable to taxation.

It is not my purpose to give at length the several arguments contained in this most excellent pamphlet. I shall, therefore, content myself with extracting from it a few passages, which stand distinguished from others, either by their wit, or the strength of reasoning displayed in them. Of that class are these that follow :

‘ To be prejudiced is always to be weak ; yet there are prejudices so near to laudable, that they have often been praised, and are always pardoned. To love their country has been considered as virtue in men whose love could not be otherwise than blind, because their preference was made without comparison ; but it has never been my fortune to find, either in ancient or modern writers, any honourable mention of those who have, with equal blindness, hated their country.

‘ These anti-patriotic prejudices are the abortions
 ‘ of folly, impregnated by faction, which, being pro-
 ‘ duced against the standing order of nature, have not
 ‘ strength sufficient for long life. They are born only
 ‘ to scream and perish, and leave them to contempt or
 ‘ detestation, whose kindness was employed to nurse
 ‘ them into mischief.’

To the menaces of the heroes of Boston, that they would leave their town and be free, rather than submit to the stamp-act, in which case he says, they would leave good houses to wiser men, he opposes this sober advice :

‘ Yet, before they quit the comforts of a warm
 ‘ home for the founding something which they think
 ‘ better, he cannot be thought their enemy who ad-
 ‘ vises them to consider well whether they shall find
 ‘ it. By turning fishermen or hunters, woodmen or
 ‘ shepherds, they may become wild, but it is not so
 ‘ easy to conceive them free ; for who can be more a
 ‘ slave than he that is driven by force from the com-
 ‘ forts of life, is compelled to leave his house to a
 ‘ casual comer, and, whatever he does, or wherever
 ‘ he wanders, finds every moment some new testi-
 ‘ mony of his own subjection. If choice of wills be
 ‘ freedom, the felon in the galleys has his choice of
 ‘ labour or stripes. The Bostonian may quit his
 ‘ house to starve in the fields ; his dog may refuse
 ‘ to set, and smart under the lash, and they may then
 ‘ congratulate each other on the smiles of liberty,
 ‘ *profuse of bliss, and pregnant with delight* *.

* Addison’s letter from Italy.

‘ To treat such designs as serious, would be to
 ‘ think too contemptibly of Bostonian understandings.
 ‘ The artifice, indeed, is not new: the blusterer who
 ‘ threatened in vain his opponent, has sometimes ob-
 ‘ tained his end, by making it believed he would
 ‘ hang himself.’

In a more serious strain of reasoning, he thus argues :
 ‘ Our colonies, however distant, have been hitherto
 ‘ treated as constituent parts of the British empire.
 ‘ The inhabitants, incorporated by English charters,
 ‘ are entitled to all the rights of Englishmen. They
 ‘ are governed by English laws, entitled to English
 ‘ dignities, regulated by English counsels, and pro-
 ‘ tected by English arms ; and it seems to follow by
 ‘ consequence not easily avoided, that they are sub-
 ‘ ject to English government, and chargeable by Eng-
 ‘ lish taxation.’

The above citations are evidences of Johnson’s skill in political controversy, and are but slight specimens of that species of oratory which delights the ear, and convinces the understanding. With respect to logical precision, and strength of argument, the tracts, from whence they are severally taken, defy all comparison ; and, as they abound in wit, and discover nothing of that acrimony which disgraces former controversies, the Disciplinarian and Bangorian not excepted, may be considered as standing exemplars of polemical eloquence, and political ratiocination.

The friends of sedition and rebellion were highly exasperated against Johnson for his interfering, by these publications, in the debate of political questions : they were provoked to see such talents as his employed in exposing the malignity of faction, and detecting

the artifices of those, who, by specious oratory and false reasoning, were courting popularity, and deluding the inhabitants of this country into a resignation of their rights. It was not, said they, for a man of his abstracted genius, a philosopher, a moralist, and a poet, to concern himself in the contentions between a parent-state and its offspring. The muses, gentle creatures! are of no party: they

‘ ————— in a ring
 ‘ Ay round about Jove’s altar sing.’

IL PENSEROSO.

And, in conformity to this character, it behoved him to be a silent spectator of all that was passing, and leave the agitation of political questions to men, whose malevolence comprehended in it all the qualifications necessary in the course of such a warfare*.

But Johnson was of another mind: he was conscious of his own abilities, and felt within himself such powers of reasoning, such a knowledge of the principles of civil policy, as qualified him for a contest, not with American planters, or colony agents, but with tumid orators, factious lawyers, and interested selfish merchants. And, in this exercise of his pen,

* In like manner did they before resent the publication by Mr. Hogarth of a print called ‘The Times,’ the intent whereof was to unite the people, and facilitate the negociations for peace. The patriots in opposition to Sir Robert Walpole had, in their time, viz. immediately after the publication of the Rake’s Progress, endeavoured to engage Mr. Hogarth to design a series of prints, to be intitled ‘The Statesman’s Progress,’ but he, scorning to prostitute his art to the purposes of faction, rejected their offer.

he was not less sincere than formidable. Admitting him to be a tory, he was a friend to both the ecclesiastical and civil establishment of his country; and he thought it his duty, as a good subject, when the legislative authority was denied, to refute the arguments of such as resisted it.

It has been insinuated, that in his vindication of the measures of government, as contained in the several pamphlets before cited, Johnson had an eye rather to the obligation which his pension implied, than to the questions in debate. This, if it could be proved, might be an objection to his integrity, but sets him but on a level with his opponents, whose apparent and known motive to opposition and clamour was the desire of popularity, as a means, whereby the ambitious among them hoped to attain power, and the indigent to acquire places or emoluments; and who will say, that an itch for vulgar applause is not as corrupt a motive to an action as any that can be imputed to one in Johnson's situation? But with matters of opinion, motives have nothing to do: arguments alone are the weapons of controversy. With respect to the first pamphlet, 'The False Alarm,' the question there agitated was, whether the expulsion of a member of one of the houses of parliament, by a majority of votes, imported a design on the liberties of the people; and impartial posterity, which must decide upon it, will look no farther than to the reasoning of each party.

Of those who endeavour at this time to excite suspicions of this nature, it may be truly said, that they understand neither the constitution, nor the politics of this country; nor do they know, that the former

is now so amended by the concessions which, since the restoration, have been made by the crown to the people, that less is to be feared from princes or their ministers, who are ever responsible for their conduct, than from artful and designing men, stimulated by ambition, or provoked by disappointment, and furnished with the fascinating powers of popular eloquence.

I forbear to animadvert on the two next succeeding pamphlets, 'Falkland's islands,' and 'The Patriot;' but shall observe that the last of the four, 'Taxation no Tyranny,' has not only never received an answer, but the converse of the proposition has never yet been so proved, by arguments founded on legal principles, as to make a vindication of Johnson's reasoning necessary, for any other purpose, than that of preventing the ignorant from being misled. The principle assumed by Johnson, that 'the supreme power of every community has the right of requiring from all its subjects such contributions as are necessary to the public safety, or public prosperity,' is as self-evident, as that obedience is due from children to parents, and is not refuted by the assertion, that the consent of those who are required thus to contribute, is necessary, for, were it so, what becomes of the right? Neither is the position, that taxation and representation are correlative, to be admitted as a principle of the English constitution, seeing it does not, nor ever did, exist as a part of it; and that the far greater number of the subjects of England, men who are not freeholders to a certain amount, copyholders, who are a third of the landholders in this kingdom, and all women, are unrepresented in parliament, and bound by laws enacted by the representatives of others, but
in

in no sense of themselves. In cities, and boroughs, the representation is often of the meanest of the people; in London, for instance, where a mechanic, if he be a liveryman, has a vote, and a freeholder, wanting that qualification, though assessed ever so high to the land-tax, has none.

This assertion might possibly have place in a state about to be founded, as none ever was or is likely to be, on solemn agreement, or that political fiction called an original contract; but, the constitution of a state already formed, is to be taken as we find it. Nor has any one of those who deny the right of a mother-country to tax its colonies, attempted to prove an exemption, by any other arguments than are to be found in Mr. Locke's Essay on Government, a discourse of general import, and which applies to no existing constitution on earth*.

The above tracts, as they contain no evidence of a personal attachment of the author to those who, at the respective times of their appearance, had the direction of the public councils, are a refutation of all those slanders which they drew on him; and, as

* I once had a conversation on this subject with a nobleman, who afterwards attained to the height of power in the administration, and was against the prosecution of the American war; the same who was once heard to utter this stabbing truth, that the sun of Great Britain's glory was then set; who went no farther than to doubt of the right above spoken of; and, for this doubt he had no better a reason to urge, than that Cromwell, in his levies on the Americans for the common service, contented himself with a bare requisition of such supplies as they, in their discretion, should judge proportionate to their circumstances and abilities. The same offer had been made by Mr. Grenville to the American agents here; but, being kept back from their constituents, it failed of its effect.

the subjects of them, severally, are questions of the greatest national importance, sufficiently distinguish him from those hireling scribblers, who, in the contests of factions, are retained on the side of either party, and whom the vulgar style political writers. In like manner did Addison and Hoadly employ their talents: they were both friends of government, and wrote in defence of the public measures, and not only escaped obloquy, but were and still are celebrated as lovers of their country.

I have hitherto forbore to speak, otherwise than in general terms, of Johnson's political principles; but, the task of reviewing the tracts above cited, has revived in my memory many of his sentiments, which, at different times, he communicated to me, on the subjects of government, the English constitution, and the motives to party opposition. That he was a tory, he not only never hesitated to confess, but, by his frequent invectives against the whigs, was forward to proclaim: yet, was he not so besotted in his notions, as to abett what is called the patriarchal scheme, as delineated by Sir Robert Filmer and other writers on government; nor, with others of a more sober cast, to acquiesce in the opinion that, because submission to governors is, in general terms, inculcated in the Holy Scriptures, the resistance of tyranny and oppression is, in all cases, unlawful: he seemed rather to adopt the sentiments of Hooker on the subject, as explained by Hoadly, and, by consequence, to look on submission to lawful authority as a moral obligation: he, therefore, condemned the conduct of James the second during his short reign; and, had he been a subject of that weak and infatuated monarch, would,

I am

I am persuaded, have resisted any invasion of his right, or unwarrantable exertion of power, with the same spirit, as did the president and fellows of Magdalen college, or those conscientious divines the seven bishops. This disposition, as it leads to whiggism, one would have thought, might have reconciled him to the memory of his successor, whose exercise of the regal authority among us merited better returns than were made him; but, it had no such effect: he never spoke of king William but in terms of reproach, and, in his opinion of him, seemed to adopt all the prejudices of jacobite bigotry and rancour.

For the English constitution, as originally framed, he ever expressed a profound reverence. He understood it well, and had noted in his mind the changes it had at various periods undergone, that is to say, first, in the reign of Hen. VII. when the yeomanry were put into a state of competition with the nobility; afterwards, when by the abolition of tenures, and the putting down the court of wards and liveries, occasion was given to Sir Harbottle Grimston to say that, in that transaction, neither did the crown know what it lost, nor the people what they had gained; and lastly, by the erecting a monied, in opposition to the landed, interest, and the introduction of the science and practice of funding.

He, therefore, looked not on Magna Charta as the palladium of our liberties, (knowing full well, that, excepting that chapter thereof, which has been so often partially cited, that is to say, with the omission of the words, *vel per legem terræ* *, very little of the whole

* Nullus liber homo capiatur, vel imprisonetur, aut disseisietur
de

whole statute will apply to the constitution in its now improved state;) but to the subsequent concessions of the crown in favour of the people, such as are the petition of right, the habeas-corpus act, the bill of rights, and numerous other statutes of a like beneficial tendency.

To party-opposition he ever expressed great aversion; and, of the pretences of patriots, always spoke with indignation and contempt. He partook of the short-lived joy that infatuated the public, when Sir Robert Walpole ceased to have the direction of the national councils, and trusted to the professions of Mr. Pulteney and his adherents, who called themselves the country-party, that all elections should thenceforward be free and uninfluenced, and that bribery and corruption, which were never practised but by courtiers and their agents, should be no more. A few weeks, nay, a few days, convinced Johnson, and indeed all England, that what had assumed the appearance of patriotism, was personal hatred and inveterate malice in some, and in others, an ambition for that power, which, when they had got it, they knew not how to exercise. A change of men, and in some respect, of measures, took place: Mr. Pulteney's ambition was gratified by a peerage; the wants of his associates were relieved by places, and seats at the public boards; and, in a short time, the stream of government resumed its former channel, and ran with a current as even as it had ever done.

de libero tenemento suo, vel libertatibus, vel liberis consuetudinibus suis, aut utlegatur, aut exuletur, aut aliquo modo destruat, nec super eum ibimus, nec super eum mittemus, nisi per legale iudicium parium suorum, vel per legem terræ. Nulli vendemus, nulli negabimus, aut differemus iustitiam, vel rectum.

Upon

Upon this developement of the motives, the views, and the consistency of the above-mentioned band of patriots, Johnson once remarked to me, that it had given more strength to government than all that had been written in its defence, meaning thereby, that it had destroyed all confidence in men of that character. Little did he then think, that the people of this country would again be deluded, by fallacious reasoning and specious eloquence, into a fruitless expenditure of near one hundred millions, or that statues would ever be erected to eternize the memory of a minister, of whom, in 1771, he said it would be happy if the nation should dismiss him to nameless obscurity.

History has been said to be philosophy teaching by example, and well would it be for mankind, if they would convert events into precepts, and not postpone their care to prevent evils, till their own experience shall have brought them home to themselves. New generations of men arise in succession, who, in the nonage of their faculties, are credulous, weak, and open to deceit: these, unhackneyed in the ways of the world, trust to the professions of all who pretend a friendship for them; and, when they are told they are ill governed, are as ready, as were the Israelites of old, to murmur against their rulers. And let all be said that can of a principle in men invested with power, to abuse it and become tyrants, the history of the world will inform us, that there is also a disease, which the Scriptures emphatically term, the madness of the people, from which evils greater than from despotism are to be feared, and that government, even where it is best administered, subsists more by force than by the consent of those who derive benefit from it.

What

What an advantage, then, does this disposition in a people give to ambitious men, endowed with that kind of eloquence, which fascinates without conviction, and, while it delights, stupifies !

His frequent reflections on the politics of this country, and the willingness of the people to be deceived, had begot in Johnson such an apathy, as rendered him deaf to the calls of those who were watching over our dearest rights. When the cry was loudest against general warrants, he took not the alarm ; and, when they were declared illegal, he protested to me, that he would, at no time of his life, have given half a crown to be for ever indemnified against their operation. The question of the legality of that kind of process is now at an end, and I will not arraign the decision that condemned it ; but it will ever remain a question, whether we have not lost more by it than we have gained ; and, that the friends of liberty, particularly the citizens of London, may be enabled to discuss it, I will furnish them with a few facts, that I believe they have never yet been aware of.

Few are so ignorant as not to know, that the English manufactures excel those of all other countries ; but many there are who need to be told, that the time may come, when they shall cease to maintain that character. Many of the princes of Europe have become emulous of our greatness, and have long been labouring to establish, in their dominions, such articles of trade, as should not only rival our's, but, in respect of cheapness, gain a preference at foreign markets. To this end, it has, for some years past, been the practice of the emissaries of foreign courts, by their agents, and the temptation of large premiums,

premiums, to engage artificers to leave this country, and, taking with them their wives and families, as also their engines, tools, and implements of their respective trades, to settle abroad. Clothiers, weavers, frame-work-knitters, watch-makers, and men of various other occupations, have been the people whom they have chiefly thus inveigled, and have, from time to time, in great numbers, in ships provided and stationed for the purpose, transported out of the kingdom. To check this practice, acts of parliament have been made, which lay such emigrants under great disabilities, even to the depriving them of the privileges of subjects, and others that inflict heavy penalties on those that seduce them; and the aid of government has been frequently implored to restrain, in their flight from their native land, ship-loads of the most useful of all subjects. The method has uniformly been, upon information given at his office, for a secretary of state to issue his warrant, a general one, that is to say, without any specification of names, to stop the sailing of the vessel, which, perhaps, was lying at Wapping, Ratcliff, or Blackwall, ready with the tide to depart. Warrants of this kind seldom failed of their effect; the emigrants were seized, and the mischief prevented.

This relief it is now not in the power of government or its ministers to grant: the answer to such an application is now, and must be — ‘General warrants have been determined to be illegal: furnish us with the names of the persons whom you would have apprehended, or we cannot help you*.’

The

* In cases where it has been possible to aid the manufacturers of this

The licence, which this determination affords, has already begun to operate, and, perhaps, in no instance more than in the article of watches. For many years past, this manufacture has flourished to such a degree, that large fortunes have been acquired by it, and that chiefly in our commerce with Spain, in which country, a watch, fabricated in England, has been deemed a present for a grandee, and even for a sovereign prince. It is well known, that the late king of Spain was extremely fond of clocks and watches, and that he was used, by letters in his own hand-writing, to correspond with Mr. Ellicot on the subject of his art; and, that this ingenious artificer this kingdom, the secretaries of state are, however, still ready to exert the little authority which the decision on general warrants has left them, as will appear by the following article of news, extracted from the St. James's Chronicle of the tenth of December, 1785:

‘ Liverpool, Dec. 1. Tuesday last, a man was committed to
 ‘ jail, on a charge of having in his possession a great number of
 ‘ machines for spinning, &c. of cotton, with intent to get such
 ‘ machines conveyed to the dominions of the emperor of Germany.
 ‘ He also stands charged with another very serious offence, the en-
 ‘ ticing a number of manufacturers in the cotton branch to go and
 ‘ settle in the emperor’s dominions. The vigilance and activity
 ‘ of ministry have traced out this most notorious offender, and
 ‘ several others engaged with him in the same pernicious scheme,
 ‘ big with destruction to this country. The penalty for having
 ‘ manufacturing machines, implements, &c. in a person’s custody,
 ‘ with the bare intent of exporting them to any place out of his
 ‘ majesty’s dominions, is 200l. and forfeiture of such manufac-
 ‘ turing machines, implements, &c. and the penalty of per-
 ‘ suading, or attempting to persuade, any artificer in manu-
 ‘ factures to reside in any place out of the king’s dominions, is
 ‘ 500l. for the first offence, and twelve months’ imprisonment,
 ‘ and 1000l. and two years’ imprisonment, for every future offence.

learn

learnt the Spanish language, to enable him to maintain the correspondence with his majesty. Since that time, the French, and also the Genevans, have become our rivals in this curious species of mechanism, and we have lately experienced, that English watches no longer find their vent abroad *. The woollen, the silk, the linen, and the cotton manufactures have been obliged to the legislature for assistance against the endeavours of other European powers, to establish them in their several countries, where, as labour is cheaper than it is with us, they would have a good chance to flourish, and exclude us from foreign markets.

These mischiefs have followed from the restraint of a power, which, as it had oftener been exercised for the benefit of the trade and manufactures of this kingdom, than to the hurt of individuals, might well have been suffered to remain where it was, especially as the ministers thereof were, at all times, responsible for any abuse of it.

The probable consequence of this innovation will be, that in a few years, we shall see the French and neighbouring nations excel us as much in other manufactures, as they already do in those of cambric and paper, in printing, and other of the manual arts.

* ‘ Twelve thousand watches have already been brought back, in the ships arrived this summer from India, which has created no small stir and combustion among the dealers in that article. They were not returned for want of a good market, but for their bad materials, and worse finishing; the natives being now become almost as good judges of this branch of British manufacture as many of our European makers.’ St. James’s Chronicle, 19th July, 1785.

The calamities which ensue from the stagnation of commerce, are many and grievous, and, when these begin to be felt, as they shortly may, those good people of this country, who have of late been so clamorous for liberty, may recover their wits, and be half persuaded, that a sinking trade, empty warehouses and unfurnished shops are greater evils than any loyal and peaceable subject need fear from the operation of a general warrant.

The publication of Johnson's political tracts, exhibited him to the world in a new character: he ceased now to be considered as one who, having been occupied in literary studies, and more conversant with books than with men, knew little of active life, the views of parties, or the artifices of designing men: on the contrary, they discovered that he had, by the force of his own genius, and the observations he had made on the history of our own and other countries, attained to such skill in the grand leading principles of political science, as are seldom acquired by those in the most active and important stations, even after long experience; and that, whatever opinions he might have formed on this subject, he had ability by strong reasoning to defend, and by a manly and convincing eloquence to enforce.

Mr. Thrale, a man of slow conceptions, but of a sound judgment, was not one of the last that discerned in his friend this talent, and believing, that the exercise of it might redound to the benefit of the public, entertained a design of bringing Johnson into parliament. We must suppose that he had previously determined to furnish him with a legal qualification, and Johnson, it is certain, was willing to accept the trust,

trust. Mr. Thrale had two meetings with the minister, who, at first, seemed inclined to find him a seat; but, whether upon conversation he doubted his fitness for his purpose, or that he thought himself in no need of his assistance, the project failed.

Had it succeeded, and Johnson become a member of the house of Commons, as he was one of the most correct speakers ever known *, he would undoubtedly have exhibited to that assembly a perfect model of senatorial eloquence; and might probably have prevented the introduction therein of a great number of words, phrases, and forms of speech, to which neither dictionaries, nor the example of any English writer of authority, have given a sanction †.

Johnson was a little soured at this disappointment: he spoke of lord North in terms of asperity, as indeed he did of all those ministers whose councils indicated a want of spirit to carry into action the measures which were resolved on as expedient: in which particular, the above minister must surely

* This all who knew him can attest. His written compositions were also so correct, that he, in general, trusted them to the press without a revision. *Rasselas* he never read till it was printed; and having written at Mr. Langton's room at Oxford, an Idler, while the post was preparing to set out, that gentleman would have perused it; but Johnson would not suffer him, saying—'You shall not do more than I have done myself.'

† Such as these: a truism—reciprocity—living in habits of friendship—a shade of difference—that line of conduct—sentiments in unison—blinking the question—I am bold to say—I should then commit myself—and others equally affected and singular. See the speeches in the public papers for the last seven years.

be exculpated, whose designs, it is too well known, were blasted by those to whom the execution of them was committed. Of the abilities of Mr. Grenville, he also entertained but a mean opinion, for his giving up the Manila ransom.—‘Grenville,’ he would say, ‘if he could have got the Manila ransom, was able to have counted the money, but he knew not how to enforce the payment of it.’ Of Sir Robert Walpole, notwithstanding that he had written against him in the early part of his life, he had a high opinion: he said of him, that he was a fine fellow, and that his very enemies deemed him so before his death: he honoured his memory for having kept this country in peace many years, as also for the goodness and placability of his temper; of which Pulteney, earl of Bath, thought so highly, that, in a conversation with Johnson, he said, that Sir Robert was of a temper so calm and equal, and so hard to be provoked, that he was very sure he never felt the bitterest invectives against him for half an hour*. To the same purpose, Johnson related the following anecdote, which he said he had

* To this motive for honouring him he might have added others; namely, the pains he took to extend the commerce of this country. Dean Tucker has enumerated the many statutes which he procured to be passed for this purpose, and has both ascertained their number, and demonstrated the benefits which, for a series of years, we have been deriving from them. By the good understanding which he kept up with cardinal Fleury, he drew the attention of that minister from the marine of France, and the consequence thereof was, that in our sea-engagements with the French, under Anson, Warren, Hawke, and other commanders, their fleets proved an easy conquest; for which reason, the memory of cardinal Fleury is execrated, even to this day, by the French, who say, he was caajoled by the English minister.

from

from lord North: Sir Robert having got into his hands some treasonable letters of his inveterate enemy, Will. Shippen, one of the heads of the Jacobite faction, he sent for him, and burned them before his face. Some time afterwards, Shippen had occasion to take the oaths to the government in the house of commons, which, while he was doing, Sir Robert, who stood next him, and knew his principles to be the same as ever, smiled:—‘Egad Robin,’ said Shippen, who had observed him, ‘that’s hardly fair.’

It is not a little wonderful, that Sir Robert Walpole could preserve such an equanimity under the greatest provocations, as he is known to have done, or that he could entertain a kindness for any one, seeing he is known to have asserted, that every man has his price; to which I will add, from unquestionable authority, that some time before his death, he uttered this sentiment—‘that so great is the depravity of the human heart, that ministers, who only could know it, were, in charity to mankind, bound to keep it a secret.’—Agreeable to this of Dr. Young,

‘Heav’n’s Sovereign saves all Beings but himself,

‘That hideous sight a naked human heart.’

Night Thoughts, Narcissa.

In the year 1775, Johnson received from the university of Oxford the highest testimony of esteem, which that learned body could confer, in a diploma creating him a doctor in the faculty of law. The instrument bears date the thirtieth day of March, in the above year, and recites the motives for this honourable distinction in

the following eulogium :—‘ Sciatis, virum illustrem,
 ‘ Samuelem Johnson, in omni humaniorum literarum
 ‘ genere eruditum, omniumque scientiarum compre-
 ‘ hensione felicissimum, scriptis suis, ad popularium
 ‘ mores formandos summâ verborum elegantiâ ac
 ‘ sententiarum gravitate compositis, ita olim incla-
 ‘ ruisse, ut dignus videretur cui ab academiâ suâ
 ‘ eximia quædam laudis præmia deferrentur, quique
 ‘ in venerabilem magistrorum ordinem summâ cum
 ‘ dignitate co-optaretur. Cum vero eundem clarissi-
 ‘ mum virum tot postea tantique labores, in patriâ
 ‘ præsertim linguâ ornandâ et stabiliendâ feliciter
 ‘ impensi, ita insigniverint, ut in literarum repub-
 ‘ licâ princeps jam et primarius jure habeatur, Nos
 ‘ Cancellarius, &c.’

In the summer of the same year, Johnson accepted of an invitation from his friend Mr. Thrale, to make one of a party with him and his wife, in a tour to Paris. No memoirs of this journey, in his own hand-writing, are extant ; nor is the want thereof to be regretted, unless it were certain, that he was enough master of the French language to be able to converse in it*, and that he had noted down the reflections he may be supposed to have made in a visit to a strange country, and a residence among a people whose national character differs from our own. His garb and mode of dressing, if it could be called dressing, had long been so inflexibly determined, as

* I have some reason to think, that at his first coming to town, and while he had lodgings in the Strand, he frequented Slaughter’s coffee-house, with a view to acquire a habit of speaking French, but he never could attain to it. Lockman used the same method, and succeeded, as Johnson himself once told me.

to resist all the innovations of fashion. His friends had therefore great difficulty in persuading him to such a compliance in this respect, as might serve to keep them in countenance, and secure him from the danger of ridicule: he yielded to their remonstrances so far as to dress in a suit of black and a Bourgeois wig, but resisted their importunity to wear ruffles*.

In the course of this narrative it has been shewn, that although, and that by his own declarations, the literary faculties of Johnson were, at most times, inert, and that he could seldom be stimulated to the exercise of his pen, but by the immediate prospect of gain; yet, he was ever ready to assist the publication of any work that had either novelty or any intrinsic worth, with a life of the author, a dedication, preface, or an introduction tending to recommend it, as in the case of 'Ascham's Pieces,' the last edition of Sir Thomas Browne's 'Christian Morals,' and Kennedy's 'Scripture Chronology,' and many more, all of which he ushered into the world, and, for aught that appears, without any recompence. With a like benevolent disposition, he was ready to assist with a prologue, or an epilogue, the representation of a play written by a friend; or with an occasional address of the same kind, under circumstances that put it in his power to promote the interests of the family of a deceased author: accordingly, he wrote, for his friend Goldsmith, a prologue to a comedy written by him, called 'The Good-natured man,' and acted in 1769; and, for the granddaughter of Milton, a prologue to *Comus*, exhibited on the fifth day of April, 1750.

* By a note in his diary it appears, that he laid out near thirty pounds in cloaths for this journey.

The same good office he performed for the wife and children of Mr. Hugh Kelly, the author of a comedy called, 'A Word to the Wife,' which, in the year 1770, was brought on the stage, but, by the malice of a party, was obstructed in the representation, and consigned to oblivion. This person, it is said, was originally a stay-maker, but, being a man of wit and parts, he quitted that unmanly occupation, and having, as we must suppose, some slender means to enable him thereto, he betook himself to reading and study, and, at a time when the discipline of the inns of court was scandalously lax, got himself called to the bar, and practised at the quarter-sessions under me, but with little success. In aid of this profession, he became the conductor of a paper called 'The Public Ledger,' and took up that precarious one of a writer for the stage, in which he met with some encouragement, till it was insinuated, that he was a pensioner of the minister, and, therefore, a fit object of patriotic vengeance. He died in the year 1769, and leaving a wife and five children unprovided for, the proprietors of Covent-garden theatre, in 1777, with their usual generosity, permitted to be acted at their house, for the benefit of his family, the comedy above-mentioned; and, to soften the hearts of the audience, Johnson was easily prevailed on to write upon the occasion the following very fine lines:

' This night presents a play, which public rage,
' Or right or wrong, once hooted from the stage:
' From zeal, or malice, now no more we dread,
' For English vengeance *wars not with the dead* *.

' A generous

* To the assertion contained in this line, I here note an exception.

- ‘ A generous foe regards with pitying eye
- ‘ The man whom fate has laid where all must lie.
- ‘ To wit, reviving from it’s author’s dust,
- ‘ Be kind, ye judges, or at least be just :
- ‘ Let no renew’d hostilities invade,
- ‘ Th’ oblivious grave’s inviolable shade.
- ‘ Let one great payment every claim appease,
- ‘ And him who cannot hurt, allow to please ;
- ‘ To please by scenes, unconscious of offence,
- ‘ By harmless merriment, or useful sense.
- ‘ Where aught of bright or fair the piece displays,
- ‘ Approve it only—’tis too late to praise.
- ‘ If want of skill or want of care appear,
- ‘ Forbear to hiss—the poet cannot hear.

ception. Whoever has viewed the monument of Camden in the south transept of Westminster abbey, must, till very lately, have remarked, that his bust thereon was defaced, the nose having been stricken off. This was no recent accident, but a designed injury to his memory, done to it by an exasperated young man who lived at the time of its erection. The fact is related by Dr. Thomas Smith, in his life of Camden, prefixed to his letters, 4to. 1691, and is to this effect. Camden, in his annals, sub anno 1595, had related, that a young lady, whose name he suppressed, but whom I conjecture to have been the daughter of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, and one of queen Elizabeth’s maids of honour, had been seduced by the arts of a young man of high rank, to whom she was afterwards married, and who became distinguished for his bravery and learning, Sir Walter Raleigh, as I suppose. This fact, though notorious in the court, gave such offence to the young man above-mentioned, who was a relation of the lady, as induced him to revenge himself on the author’s memory by mutilating his effigy. The injury done to it has, however, been lately repaired, and the feature restored, by the direction, and at the expence of a friend to the memory of Camden.

- ‘ By all, like him, must praise and blame be found,
- ‘ At last, a fleeting gleam, or empty sound.
- ‘ Yet then shall calm reflection bless the night,
- ‘ When liberal pity dignified delight;
- ‘ When pleasure fired her torch at virtue’s flame,
- ‘ And mirth was bounty with an humbler name.’

In the year 1777, he was induced, by a case of a very extraordinary nature, to the exercise of that indiscriminate humanity, which, in him, was obedient to every call. A divine of the church of England, Dr. William Dodd, already mentioned in the course of this account, and who had assisted in the education of the present earl of Chesterfield, having, by his extravagance, involved himself in difficulties, had recourse to the following, among many other expedients, to raise money. As a pretended agent for this nobleman, and in consideration of the sum of 600*l.* he forged the hand of the earl to the grant of an annuity, chargeable on his estate, which forgery being detected, Dodd was convicted of felony, and sentenced to the usual punishment for such offences. The public were, at first, very little interested in the fate of a man, who, besides the arts he had practised to make himself conspicuous as a man of letters, had rendered himself scandalous, by an offer, to the first law-officer in the kingdom, of a large sum of money, for a presentation to a valuable rectory; but, by various artifices, and particularly, the insertion of his name in the public papers, with such palliatives as he and his friends could invent, never without the epithet of *unfortunate*, they were betrayed into such an enthusiastic commiseration of his case,

case, as would have led a stranger to believe, that himself had been no accessory to his distresses, but that they were the inflictions of Providence.

Great endeavours were used with the earl, to prevail on him to desist from a prosecution, but without effect. His lordship preferred a bill of indictment for felony, and the same being found before me at Hicks's Hall, upon the evidence of himself, and other witnesses, Dodd was, at the Old Bailey, arraigned thereon, and convicted.

The evidence on the trial, was so very full and clear, that the jury hesitated not in the least to pronounce him guilty of the indictment; and, no circumstances of alleviation appearing, they did not, as juries seldom fail to do where that is the case, recommend him as an object of that clemency, which his majesty is ever ready to exert, in favour of those who have the least claim to it.

We live in an age in which humanity is the fashion. If the reports of the gaol-committee in 1726 are, in all particulars, to be depended on, and do not exaggerate the facts therein stated, there was a time when, as well prisoners for debt, as for offences, were cruelly treated by those who had the custody of them; but, at this day, the temper of the times is under a contrary bias, for, not only in actual confinement, are prisoners treated with greater lenity than till of late years was ever known, but, in courts of justice, the regard shewn to offenders falls little short of respect. In prosecutions at the suit of the crown, the indulgence of prisoners is nearly as great as it ought to be, were that true which the law does but hardly presume, viz. that every offender, who is brought to a legal trial,

is

is innocent, till his guilt be proved. Those whose duty it is to conduct the evidence, fearing the censure that others have incurred by a contrary treatment of prisoners, are restrained from enforcing it; and, as it is an exercise of compassion that costs nothing, and is sure to gain the applause of vulgar hearers, every one interests himself on the side of the prisoner, and hopes, by his zeal in his behalf, to be distinguished as a man of more than ordinary humanity.

The tenderness of our courts of justice, in prosecutions that affect the life or liberty of the offender, is acknowledged and celebrated by all writers on the subjects of jurisprudence and internal policy; but, beside this, the chances of eluding conviction, or, if not that, of punishment, are so many, that they deter many injured persons from the prosecution of great criminals; and, as it is a speculation that has often employed my thoughts, I will endeavour at an enumeration of them. The chances are these: 1 That the offender is not discovered, or, if discovered, not apprehended. 2 That the person injured is not both able and willing to prosecute him. 3 That the evidence is not sufficient for the finding of the bill, or if it be, 4 That the indictment is so framed as that the offender cannot be convicted on it; or, 5 That the witnesses to support it may die, or be prevailed upon to abscond, or to soften their testimony; or, 6 They may be entangled or made to contradict themselves, or each other, in a cross examination, by the prisoner's council; or, 7 A mild judge; or, 8 An ignorant or perverse jury: 9 A recommendation to mercy; or, 10 Appeals to the public by states of his case in pamphlets, or news-paper paragraphs,

ragraphs, which the Newgate solicitors know very well how to get drawn. 11 Practices with a jury to obtain a declaration, that some of them were dissatisfied with the verdict. 12 A motion in arrest of judgment. 13 A writ of error grounded on some defect or mistake on the face of the record. 14 An escape; and lastly, Interest to procure a pardon*.

But

* To this purpose, and as a caveat against seeking redress for injuries by going to law, I recollect a saying of a very sagacious and experienced citizen, Mr. Selwin, who formerly was a candidate for the office of chamberlain, and missed it only by seven votes out of near seven thousand.—‘A man,’ says he, ‘who deliberates about going to law, should have, first, a good cause; secondly, a good purse; thirdly, an honest and skilful attorney; fourthly, good evidence; fifthly, able council; sixthly, an upright judge; seventhly, an intelligent jury; and, with all these on his side, if he has not, eighthly, good luck, it is odds but he miscarries in his suit.’

The same person told me the following story: He was once requested, by a man under sentence of death in Newgate, to come and see him in his cell, and, in pure humanity, he made him a visit. The man briefly informed him, that he had been tried and convicted of felony, and was in daily expectation of the arrival of the warrant for his execution; ‘but,’ said he, ‘I have 200l. and you are a man of character, and had the court-interest when you stood for chamberlain: I should therefore hope, it is in your power to get me off.’—Mr. Selwin was struck with so strange an application, and, to account for it, asked, if there were any alleviating circumstances in his case: the man peevishly answered—No,—but that he had enquired into the history of the place where he was, and could not find, that any one who had two hundred pounds, was ever hanged.—Mr. Selwin told him, it was out of his power to help him, and bade him farewell,—‘which,’ added he, ‘he did; for he found means to escape punishment.’

The disposition of the law, and of magistrates, to be merciful to offenders against it, leads me to remark, that in the people of this country there is a general propensity to humanity; and that, notwithstanding the cry against merciless creditors,

urged

But Dodd's case was such as excluded him from the benefit of all the above chances, excepting the last; and of that he laboured with all his might to avail himself. A petition to the throne for a pardon, was an expedient that naturally suggested itself, but, as it required the utmost powers of eloquence to palliate his offence, he found means to interest Dr. Johnson in his behalf, and easily procured from him two of the most energetic compositions of the kind ever seen, the one a petition from himself to the king, the other, a like address from his wife to the queen, severally conceived in the terms following :

‘ To the King’s most excellent Majesty,

‘ SIR,

‘ It is most humbly represented to your majesty
‘ by William Dodd, the unhappy convict now lying
‘ under sentence of death :

urged in favour of insolvent acts, such a character is hardly now to be found. I have, in my time, discharged great numbers of debtors under such acts, and cannot recollect five instances where their discharge has been opposed. And, with regard to bankrupts and other insolvents, I am warranted by long experience and much observation to say, that in cases where their inability to pay their debts has arisen from misfortune, the readiness of creditors to accept a small composition, and give them fresh credit, has been such as I could not contemplate without calling to remembrance the parable in the Gospel of the lord that was moved with compassion, and forgave his debtor. And, with respect to injuries, such as personal assaults or indignities, an Englishman never seeks farther than to humble his adversary: when that is done, forgiveness and shaking hands follow of course. If, therefore, it be true, that humanity is the offspring of courage, we have not far to seek for the source of British bravery.

‘ That

‘ That William Dodd, acknowledging the justice of
‘ the sentence denounced against him, has no hope or
‘ refuge but in your majesty’s clemency.

‘ That though to recollect or mention the useful-
‘ ness of his life, or the efficacy of his ministry, must
‘ overwhelm him, in his present condition, with
‘ shame and sorrow; he yet humbly hopes, that his
‘ past labours will not wholly be forgotten; and that
‘ the zeal with which he has exhorted others to a good
‘ life, though it does not extenuate his crime, may
‘ mitigate his punishment.

‘ That debased as he is by ignominy, and distressed
‘ as he is by poverty, scorned by the world, and de-
‘ tested by himself, deprived of all external comforts,
‘ and afflicted by consciousness of guilt, he can derive
‘ no hopes of longer life, but that of repairing the
‘ injury he has done to mankind, by exhibiting an
‘ example of shame and submission, and of expiating
‘ his sins by prayer and penitence.

‘ That for this end, he humbly implores from the
‘ clemency of your majesty, the continuance of a life
‘ legally forfeited; and of the days which, by your
‘ gracious compassion, he may yet live, no one shall
‘ pass without a prayer, that your majesty, after a
‘ long life of happiness and honour, may stand, at
‘ the day of final judgment, among the merciful that
‘ obtain mercy.

‘ So fervently prays the most distressed and wretched
‘ of your majesty’s subjects,

‘ WILLIAM DODD.’

‘ To the Queen’s most excellent Majesty.

‘ MADAM,

‘ It is most humbly represented by Mary Dodd,
‘ wife of Dr. William Dodd, now lying in prison
‘ under sentence of death :

‘ That she has been the wife of this unhappy man
‘ more than twenty-seven years, and has lived with
‘ him in the greatest happiness of conjugal union, and
‘ the highest state of conjugal confidence.

‘ That she has been a constant witness of his un-
‘ wearied endeavours for public good, and his labo-
‘ rious attendance on charitable institutions. Many
‘ are the families whom his care has delivered from
‘ want ; many are the hearts which he has freed from
‘ pain, and the faces which he has cleared from sor-
‘ row.

‘ That, therefore, she most humbly throws herself
‘ at the feet of the queen, earnestly intreating, that
‘ the petition of a distressed wife asking mercy for a
‘ husband, may be considered as naturally soliciting
‘ the compassion of her majesty ; and that, when her
‘ wisdom has compared the offender’s good actions
‘ with his crime, she will be pleased to represent his
‘ case to our most gracious sovereign, in such terms
‘ as may dispose him to mitigate the rigour of the
‘ law.

‘ So prays your majesty’s most dutiful subject and
‘ suppliant,

‘ MARY DODD.’

To the first of these petitions, but not without difficulty, Mrs. Dodd first got the hands of the jury that found the bill against her husband, and after that, as it is supposed, of the jury that tried him. It was then circulated about, and all the while the cry for mercy was kept up in the news-papers, and the merits and sufferings of the unfortunate divine were so artfully represented by paragraphs therein inserted, that, in a short space of time, no fewer than twenty-three thousand names were subscribed thereto. Moreover, letters and addressees, written also by Johnson, imploring their interposition, were sent to the minister and other great persons.

While the two petitions were in suspense, the following observations, penned by Dr. Johnson, appeared in the public papers :

‘ Yesterday was presented to the secretary of state,
 ‘ by earl Percy, a petition in favour of Dr. Dodd,
 ‘ signed by twenty-three thousand hands. On this
 ‘ occasion it is natural to consider,

‘ That, in all countries, penal laws have been re-
 ‘ laxcd, as particular reasons have emerged.

‘ That a life eminently beneficent, a single action
 ‘ eminently good, or even the power of being useful
 ‘ to the public, have been sufficient to protect the
 ‘ life of a delinquent.

‘ That no arbiter of life and death has ever been
 ‘ censured for granting the life of a criminal to honest
 ‘ and powerful sollicitation.

‘ That the man for whom a nation petitions, must
 ‘ be presumed to have merit uncommon, in kind or
 ‘ in degree; for, however the mode of collecting

‘ subscriptions, or the right of judgment exercised
‘ by the subscribers, may be open to dispute, it is,
‘ at least, plain, that something is done for this man
‘ that was never done for any other; and govern-
‘ ment, which must proceed upon general views,
‘ may rationally conclude, that this man is something
‘ better than other offenders have been, or has done
‘ something more than others have done.

‘ That though the people cannot judge of the ad-
‘ ministration of justice so well as their governors, yet
‘ their voice has always been regarded.

‘ That this is a case in which the petitioners de-
‘ termine against their own interest; those for whose
‘ protection the law was made, intreat its relaxation,
‘ and our governors cannot be charged with the
‘ consequences which the people bring upon them-
‘ selves.

‘ That as this is a case without example, it will
‘ probably be without consequences, and many ages
‘ will elapse before such a crime is again committed
‘ by such a man.

‘ That though life be spared, justice may be sa-
‘ tisfied with ruin, imprisonment, exile, infamy, and
‘ penury.

‘ That if the people now commit an error, their
‘ error is on the part of mercy: and that perhaps
‘ history cannot shew a time, in which the life of a
‘ criminal, guilty of nothing above fraud, was re-
‘ fused to the cry of nations, to the joint supplica-
‘ tion of three and twenty thousand petitioners.’

While Dodd was waiting the event of the petitions,
his wife and friends were not idle. Dr. Johnson told
me,

me, that they had offered Akerman, the keeper of Newgate, a thousand pounds to let him escape; and that failing, that a number of them, with bank-notes in their pockets, to the amount of five hundred pounds, had watched for a whole evening, about the door of the prison, for an opportunity of corrupting the turnkey, but could not succeed in the attempt.

When all hopes of a favourable answer to either of the petitions were at an end, Johnson drew up for publication a small collection of what are called 'Occasional papers by the late William Dodd, 'L. L. D.' and five hundred copies thereof were printed for the benefit of his wife; but she, conscious that they were not of her husband's writing, would not consent to their being published; and the whole number, except two or three copies, was suppressed. The last office he performed for this wretched man, was the composing a sermon, which he delivered in the chapel of Newgate, on Friday 6th June, 1777, and which was soon after published with the title of 'The Convict's Address.'

Johnson had never seen the face of Dodd in his life. His wife had found her way to him during his confinement, and had interested him so strongly in his behalf, that he lamented his fate, as he would have done that of an intimate friend under the like circumstances. He was deeply concerned at the failure of the petitions; and asked me at the time, if the request contained in them was not such an one as ought to have been granted to the prayer of twenty-three thousand subjects? to which I answered, that the subscription of popular petitions was a thing of

course, and that, therefore, the difference between twenty and twenty thousand names was inconsiderable. He further censured the clergy very severely, for not interposing in his behalf, and said, that their inactivity arose from a paltry fear of being reproached with partiality towards one of their own order.

Here I cannot forbear remarking, an inconsistency in the opinion of Johnson respecting the case of Dodd. He assisted in the solicitations for his pardon, yet, in his private judgment, he thought him unworthy of it, having been known to say, that had he been the adviser of the king, he should have told him that, in pardoning Dodd, his justice, in remitting the Perreaus to their sentence, would have been called in question.

About this time, Dr. Johnson changed his dwelling in Johnson's court, for a somewhat larger in Bolt court, Fleet street, where he commenced an intimacy with the landlord of it, a very worthy and sensible man, some time since deceased, Mr. Edmund Allen the printer. Behind it was a garden, which he took delight in watering; a room on the ground-floor was assigned to Mrs. Williams, and the whole of the two pair of stairs floor was made a repository for his books; one of the rooms thereon being his study. Here, in the intervals of his residence at Streatham, he received the visits of his friends, and, to the most intimate of them, sometimes gave, not inelegant dinners.

Being at ease in his circumstances, and free from that solicitude which had embittered the former part of his life, he sunk into indolence, till his faculties seemed to be impaired: deafness grew upon him; long intervals of mental absence interrupted his conversation,

versation, and it was difficult to engage his attention to any subject. His friends, from these symptoms, concluded, that his lamp was emitting its last rays, but the lapse of a short period gave them ample proofs to the contrary.

In the year 1774, the long-agitated question of literary property received a final decision, on an appeal to the supreme judicature of this kingdom, whereby it was, in effect, declared, that such property was merely ideal, and existed only in imagination*. The immediate consequence of this determination

* In the arguments in this case, on a special verdict, in the court of King's-bench, it was admitted, that precedents, directly to the point, were wanting : it was, therefore, determined by lord Mansfield and two other judges, Yates alone dissenting, upon the simple principles of natural justice and moral fitness, that the right contended for did exist ; and that these are part of the law of England is asserted, and has ever been understood. Vide Dodderidge's ' English Lawyer,' page 154 to 161, and ' Doctor and Student' passim. Nevertheless, in the argument of an appeal to the lords from a decree of the court of Chancery in 1774, it was contended, that, in new cases, the judges had no right to decide by the rules of moral fitness and equitable right, but were to be ruled by precedents alone. An objection the more remarkable, as coming from men who are known to despise the study of antiquity, to have ridiculed the perusal of records, and to have treated with the utmost scorn, what they are pleased to term, black-letter learning. If this be law, and every judicial determination needs a precedent, we are left at a loss to account for those early and original determinations for which no precedent could be found, but which are now become fundamental principles of law : such, for instance, as that a bare right of action is not assignable ; that, of things fixed to the freehold, felony cannot be committed ; that a release to one trespasser is a release to all ; and numberless others. Lord Hardwicke has been known to direct a search for precedents, and, when none could be found, to say—' I will make one.'

was, a scramble of the lowest and least principled of the booksellers, for the jewel thus cast among them. Regardless of that obvious rule of natural justice, which gives the possessor a right to what he has purchased, they printed books, for the copy-right whereof very large sums had been paid by booksellers, who, for their liberality to authors, and the encouragement by them given to voluminous works, had been looked on and acknowledged as the patrons of literature. Among these numerous depredators was one, who projected an edition of the English poets, which, by advertisements conceived in the most hyperbolical terms, and calculated to impose upon the credulity of the ignorant, was obtruded on the public.

The booksellers, against whose interest this intended publication was likely to operate, derived their right to the works of many of the poets, included in the above design by mesne assignments, from those ever respectable men the Tonsons, who had purchased them of their authors. To check this attempt, therefore, they determined themselves to publish an edition of the poets, and, in order to obtain for it a preference, engaged Johnson to write the lives of all, or the chief of them; and he undertook and executed the task with great alacrity, and in a manner that argued not the least decline of his faculties.

When Johnson had determined on this work, he was to seek for the best mode of executing it. On a hint from a literary lady of his acquaintance and mine, he adopted, for his outline, that form in which the countess D'Aunois has drawn up the memoirs of the
French

French poets, in her 'Recueils des plus belles pieces des Poëtes François;' and the foundation of his work was, the lives of the dramatic poets by Langbaine, and the lives of the poets at large by Winstanley, and that more modern one than either, their lives by Giles Jacob, whose information, in many instances, was communicated by the persons themselves. Nevertheless, the materials which Johnson had to work on were very scanty. He was never a sedulous enquirer after facts or anecdotes, nor very accurate in fixing dates: Oldys was the man of all others the best qualified for such an employment; Johnson's talent was disquisition; a genius like his, disdained so servile a labour. Whenever, therefore, he found himself at a loss for such intelligence as his work required, he availed himself of the industry of a friend or two, who took pleasure in furnishing him with such particulars as are to be found in the lives of Addison, Prior, Pope, Swift, Gay, and a few others, whose persons, habits, and characters, some yet, or very lately living, were able, either from their own knowledge, or authenticated tradition, to describe.

The book came abroad in the year 1778, in ten small volumes, and no work of Johnson has been more celebrated. It has been said to contain the soundest principles of criticism, and the most judicious examen of the effusions of poetic genius, that any country, not excepting France, has to shew; and so much of this is true, that, in our perusal of it, we find our curiosity, as to facts and circumstances, absorbed in the contemplation of those penetrating reflections and nice discriminations, which are far the greater part of it.

It is, nevertheless, to be questioned, whether Johnson possessed all the qualities of a critic, one of which seems to be a truly poetic faculty. This may seem a strange doubt, of one who has transfused the spirit of one of Mr. Pope's finest poems into one written by himself in a dead language, and, in two instances, nearly equalled the greatest of the Roman satyrists. By the poetic faculty, I mean that power which is the result of a mind stored with beautiful images, and which exerts itself in creation and description: of this Johnson was totally devoid. His organs, imperfect as they were, could convey to his imagination but little of that intelligence which forms the poetic character, and produces that enthusiasm which distinguishes it. If we try his ability by Shakespeare's famous description;

- ‘ The poet’s eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
- ‘ Doth glance from Heaven to earth, from earth
- ‘ to Heaven;
- ‘ And, as imagination bodies forth
- ‘ The forms of things unknown, the poet’s pen
- ‘ Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
- ‘ A local habitation, and a name:’

he will appear deficient. We know that he wanted this power; that he had no eye that could be said to roll or glance, and, therefore, that all his conceptions of the grandeur and magnificence of external objects, of beautiful scenes, and extensive prospects, were derived from the reports of others, and consequently were but the feeble impressions of their archetypes;

so

so that it may be questioned whether, either waking or sleeping,

‘ Such fights as youthful poets dream,’
were ever presented to his view.

This defect in his imaginative faculty, may well account for the frigid commendation which Johnson bestows on Thomson, and other of the descriptive poets, on many fine passages in Dryden, and on the Henry and Emma of Prior. Moral sentiments, and versification, seem chiefly to have engaged his attention, and on these his criticisms are accurate, but severe, and not always impartial. His avowed fondness for rhyme is one of the blemishes in his judgment: he entertained it in opposition to Milton, and cherished it through the whole of his life; and it led him into many errors. Dryden had his doubts about the preference of rhyme to blank verse; and I have heard Johnson accuse him for want of principle in this respect, and of veering about in his opinion on the subject. No such imputation could fasten on himself.

That Johnson had no sense of the harmony of musical sounds, himself would frequently confess, but this defect left him not without the power of deriving pleasure from metrical harmony, from that commixture of long and short quantities, which the laws of prosody have reduced to rule, and from whence arises a delight in those whose ear is unaffected by consonance. The strokes on the pulsatile instruments, the drum for instance, though they produce monotonous sounds, have, if made by rule, mathematical ratios of duple and triple, with numberless fractions,

and admit of an infinite variety of combinations, which give pleasure to the auditory faculty; but of this Johnson seems also to have been insensible. That his own numbers are so harmonious as, in general, we find them, must have been the effect of his sedulous attention to the writings of Dryden and Pope, and the discovery of some secret in their versification, of which he was able to avail himself.

If Johnson be to be numbered among those poets in whom the powers of understanding, more than those of the imagination, are seen to exist, we have a reason for that coldness and insensibility which he so often discovers in the course of this work; and, when we recollect that he professed himself to be a fastidious critic, we are not to wonder, that he is sometimes backward in bestowing applause on passages that seem to merit it. In short, he was a scrupulous estimator of beauties and blemishes, and possessed a spirit of criticism, which, by long exercise, may be said to have become mechanical. So nicely has he balanced the one against the other, that, in some instances, he has made neither scale preponderate, and, in others, by considering the failings of his authors as positive demerit, he has left some celebrated names in a state of reputation below mediocrity. A spirit like this, had before actuated him in his preface to Shakespeare, in which, by a kind of arithmetical process, subtracting from his excellencies his failings, he has endeavoured to sink him in the opinion of his numerous admirers, and to persuade us, against reason and our own feelings, that the former are annihilated by the latter.

His

His censures of the writings of lord Lyttelton, and of Gray, gave great offence to the friends of each : the first cost him the friendship of a lady, whose remarks on the genius of Shakespeare have raised her to a degree of eminence among the female writers of this time ; and the supposed injury done by him to the memory of Gray, is resented by the whole university of Cambridge. The character of Swift he has stigmatized with the brand of pride and selfishness, so deeply impressed, that the marks thereof seem indelible. In the praises of his wit, he does him no more than justice ; of his moral qualities, he has made the most ; and of his learning, of which Swift possessed but a very small portion, he has said nothing. Few can be offended at Johnson's account of this man, whose arrogance and malevolence were a reproach to human nature ; and in whose voluminous writings little is to be found, that can conduce to the improvement or benefit of mankind, or, indeed, that it be-
seemed a clergyman to publish.

In his own judgment of the lives of the poets, Johnson gave the preference to that of Cowley, as containing a nicer investigation and discrimination of the characteristics of wit, than is elsewhere to be found. Others have assigned to Dryden's life the pre-eminence. Upon the whole, it is a finely written, and an entertaining book, and is likely to be coeval with the memory of the best of the writers whom it celebrates.

To the life of Pope, he thought proper to adjoin a criticism on the epitaphs of that poet, written some years before, and inserted in a monthly pamphlet, intitled 'The Visitor,' in which he detects a great
number

number of faulty passages, and puerile sentiments. An attempt of the like kind had formerly been made by Concanen, one of the Dunciad heroes, in a paper called 'The Speculatist,' first published in one of the periodical papers of the day, and afterwards collected into an octavo volume; but it went no farther than to a censure of the inscription on Craggs's monument in Westminster abbey, which, by the way, was never intended for an epitaph, but is an eulogium on that statesman, taken from Pope's 'Epistle to Mr. Addison, occasioned by his dialogues on medals.' Johnson has noticed this, and apologizing for some faults in it, imputes them, in his strong manner of expression, to the violence with which the lines were torn from the original. The whole of Concanen's criticism turns upon the length of the inscription, which is six lines, and, by a strange blunder of Pope, is recommended as a motto for the supposed medal to be struck in commemoration of his services, and gives occasion to the critic to ask——'Is this a motto for a medal or a mill-stone.'

But Johnson, who never examined the writings of any author, but with an eye the most penetrating, has taken a nearer view of these compositions of Pope, as they appear in his works, and discovered, that scarce any one of them, notwithstanding the beauty of versification which they display, will bear the test of sound criticism. For his remarks on them, this is no fit place: the inquisitive reader is therefore referred for the perusal of them to the life of Pope, among the poets; and, for farther information on the subject of monumental inscriptions, to 'An Essay on Epitaphs,' among his philological tracts.

All

All that is necessary to remark on his examen of Pope's epitaphs is, that, in one instance, it was productive of a singular event, the total erasure of that epitaph on Sir Godfrey Kneller's monument in Westminster abbey, which had long been objected to, as being a very indifferent imitation of cardinal Bembo's famous distich on Raphael; and it seems that the author thought so, for, in the later editions of his works, he has omitted it.

‘ Ille hic est Raphaël, timuit quo sospite vinci
 ‘ Rerum magna parens, & moriente mori.’

After he had finished the lives of the poets, Johnson, contemplating the strength of his mental powers, was so little sensible of any decay in them, that he entertained a design of giving to the world a translation of that voluminous work of Thuanus, the history of his own times, an undertaking surely too laborious for one who had nearly completed the age of man, and whose mind was generally occupied by subjects of greater importance than any that relate to this world. But, in this estimate of his abilities, he soon found himself deceived. Sleepless nights, and the use of opium, which he took in large quantities, alternately depressed and raised his spirits, and rendered him an incompetent judge of his own powers, so that, had he pursued his resolution, he would, doubtless, have sunk under the burden of so great a labour.

It may farther be questioned whether, upon trial, he would not have found himself unequal to the task of transfusing into an English version the spirit
 of

of his author. Johnson's talent was original thinking, and though he was ever able to express his own sentiments in nervous language, he did not always succeed in his attempts to familiarise the sense of others: his translation of Pere Lobo's voyage has little to recommend it but the subject-matter. Among his papers was found, a translation from Sallust of the 'Bellum Catilinarium,' so flatly and insipidly rendered, that the suffering it to appear would have been an indelible disgrace to his memory.

We must now take our leave of Johnson as an author, and view him as a man worn out with literary labour and disease, contemplating his dissolution, and exerting all his powers to resist that constitutional malady which now, more than ever, oppressed him. To divert himself from a train of thinking which often involved him in a labyrinth of doubts and difficulties touching a future state of existence, he solicited the frequent visits of his friends and acquaintance, the most discerning of whom could not but see, that the fabric of his mind was tottering; and, to allay those scruples and terrors which haunted him in his vacant hours, he betook himself to the reading of books of practical divinity, and, among the rest, the writings of Baxter, and others of the old puritan and non-conforming divines. Of Baxter, he entertained a very high opinion, and often spoke of him to me as a man of great parts, profound learning, and exemplary piety: he said, of the office for the communion drawn up by him and produced at the Savoy-conference, that it was one of the finest compositions of the ritual kind he had ever seen*.

* It is printed at the end of the first volume of Dr. Calamy's abridgement of Mr. Baxter's History of his Life and Times.

It was a circumstance to be wondered at, that a high-churchman, as Johnson ever professed himself to be, should be driven to seek for spiritual comfort in the writings of sectaries; men whom he affected, as well to condemn for their ignorance, as to hate for their principles; but, as his acquaintance with the world, and with the writings of such men as Watts, Foster, Lardner, and Lowman, increased, these prejudices were greatly softened. Of the early puritans, he thought their want of general learning was atoned for by their skill in the Scriptures, and the holiness of their lives*; and, to justify his opinion of them,

* Yet have there been among them a few, as eminent for their learning as their piety, and, in justice to their memory, I will mention two of this character: the one was Gataker, well known for his excellent edition of the Meditations of the emperor Marcus Antoninus, and his Commentary on the prophecy of Jeremiah; the other, a somewhat earlier writer, old Mr. Dod, surnamed the Decalogist, an exquisite Hebrew scholar, a man of primitive sanctity, and a passive non-conforming divine. His memory is not quite extinct among the dissenters of the present age, for I remember, in my youth, to have seen, in the window of an old bookseller of that denomination, a printed broad sheet, with a wooden portrait at the top thereof, intitled ‘Mr. Dod’s sayings,’ being a string of religious aphorisms, intended to be stuck up in the houses of poor persons. In Fuller’s Worthies, page 181, and also in his Church-history, book xi. page 219, are some particulars that mark his character, and in the latter, page 220, the following note of his simplicity. ‘He was but coarsely used by the cavaliers, and when the soldiers, who came to plunder him, brought down the sheets out of his chamber, into the room where he sat by the fire-side, he, in their absence to search for more, took one pair, and clapped them under his cushion whereon he sat, much pleasing himself, after their departure, that he had, as he said, plundered the plunderers, and, by a lawful felony, had saved so much of his own to himself. He died the same year with archbishop Laud, 1646, and with him,’ this author adds, ‘the old puritan seemed to expire.’

and

and their writings, he once cited to me a saying of Howell in one of his letters, that to make a man a complete Christian, he must have the works of a Papist, the words of a Puritan, and the faith of a Protestant *. At times when he was most distressed, I recommended to him the perusal of bishop Taylor's 'Rules and Exercises of holy Living and Dying,' and also, his 'Ductor Dubitantium,' a book abounding in erudition, and most aptly suiting his circumstances. Of the former, though he placed the author at the head of all the divines that have succeeded the fathers, he said, that in the reading thereof, he had found little more than he brought himself; and, at the mention of the latter, he seemed to shrink. His Greek testament was generally within his reach, and he read much in it. He was competently skilled in the writings of the fathers, yet was he more conversant with those of the great English church-men, namely, Hooker, Usher, Mede, Hammond, Sanderfon, Hall, and others of that class. Dr. Henry More, of Cambridge, he did not much affect: he was a platonist, and, in Johnson's opinion, a visionary. He would frequently cite from him, and laugh at, a passage to this effect:—'At the consummation of all things, it shall come to pass, that eternity shall shake hands with opacity.' He had never, till I mentioned

* Howell's Letters, book ii. letter 11. The author must here be understood to mean protestants of the established church, for the puritans are also protestants. This dictum carries the more weight with it, as it comes from a man whose sentiments, respecting sectaries, may be inferred from the following passage in another of his letters:—'If I hate any, it is those schismatics that puzzle the sweet peace of the church; so that I could be content to see an Anabaptist go to Hell on a Brownist's back.' Book i. letter 32.

him, heard of Dr. Thomas Jackson, of Corpus Christi college, Oxon. Upon my recommendation of his works, in three folio volumes, he made me a promise to buy and study them, which he lived not to perform. He was, for some time, pleased with Kempis's, or rather John Gerson's tract 'De Imitatione Christi,' but at length laid it aside, saying, that the main design of it was to promote monastic piety, and inculcate ecclesiastical obedience. One sentiment therein, he, however, greatly applauded, and I find it adopted by bishop Taylor, who gives it in the following words:—'It is no great matter to live lovingly with good-natured, with humble and meek persons; but he that can do so with the froward, with the wilful, and the ignorant, with the peevish and perverse, he only hath true charity. Always remembering, that our true solid peace, the peace of God, consists rather in compliance with others, than in being complied with; in suffering and forbearing, rather than in contention and victory*.'

In the course of these studies, he exercised his powers of eloquence, in the composition of forms of devotion, adapted to his circumstances and the state of his mind at different times. Of these, a specimen has lately been given to the public. He also translated into Latin many of the collects in our liturgy. This was a practice which he took up in his early years, and continued through his life, as he did also the noting down the particular occurrences of each day thereof, but in a loose and desultory way,

* Polemical and moral discourses, folio, 1657, page 25.

in books of various forms, and in no regular or continued succession.

He seemed to acquiesce in that famous saying of John Valdesso, which induced the emperor Charles the fifth to resign his crown, and betake himself to religious retirement; '*Oportet inter vitæ negotia, et diem mortis, spatium aliquod intercedere **,' nevertheless, he was but an ill husband of his time. He was, throughout his life, making resolutions to rise at eight, no very early hour, and breaking them. The visits of idle, and some of them very worthless persons, were never unwelcome to him; and though they interrupted him in his studies and meditations, yet, as they gave him opportunities of discourse, and furnished him with intelligence, he strove rather to protract than shorten or discountenance them; and, when abroad, such was the laxity of his mind, that he consented to the doing of many things, otherwise indifferent, for the avowed reason that they would drive on time.

Of his visitors at this time myself was one, and having known the state of his mind at different periods, and his habitual dread of insanity, I was greatly desirous of calming his mind, and rendering him susceptible of the many enjoyments of which I thought him then in possession, namely, a permanent income, tolerable health, a high degree of reputation for his moral qualities and literary exertions, by which latter he had made a whole country sensible of its obligation to him, and, lastly, that he had as

* It is fit, that between the business of life, and the day of death, some space should intervene.

few enemies as a man of his eminence could expect. On one day in particular, when I was suggesting to him these and the like reflections, he gave thanks to Almighty God, but added, that notwithstanding all the above benefits, the prospect of death, which was now at no great distance from him, was become terrible, and that he could not think of it but with great pain and trouble of mind.

I was very much surprised and shocked at such a declaration from such a man, and told him, that from my long acquaintance with him, I conceived his life to have been an uniform course of virtue, that he had ever shewn a deep sense of, and zeal for, religion, and that, both by his example and his writings, he had recommended the practice of it: that he had not rested, as many do, in the exercise of common honesty, avoiding the grosser enormities, yet rejecting those advantages that result from the belief of divine revelation, but that he had, by prayer, and other exercises of devotion, cultivated in his mind the seeds of goodness, and was become habitually pious. These suggestions made little impression on him: he lamented the indolence in which he had spent his life, talked of secret transgressions, and seemed desirous of telling me more to that purpose than I was willing to hear.

From these perturbations of mind, he had, however, at times, relief. Upon a visit, that I made him some months after, I found him much altered in his sentiments. He said that, having reflected on the transactions of his life, and acknowledged his sins before God, he felt within himself a confidence in his

mercy, and that, trusting to the merits of his Redeemer, his mind was now in a state of perfect tranquillity.

In these discourses, he would frequently mention, with great energy and encomiums, the penitence of the man who assumed the name, and by that I must call him, of George Psalmanaazar, a Frenchman, but who pretended to be a native of the island of Formosa, and a convert from paganism to Christianity, and, as such, received baptism. By the help of his great learning and endowments, he eluded all attempts to detect his impostures, but, in his more advanced age, became a sincere penitent, and, without any other motive than a sense of his sin, published a confession of them, and begged the pardon of mankind in terms the most humble and affecting. The remainder of his life was exemplary, and he died in 1763. The habitation of this person was in Ironmonger row, Old street, Middlesex, in the neighbourhood whereof he was so well known and esteemed, that, as Dr. Hawkesworth once told me, scarce any person, even children, passed him without shewing him the usual signs of respect. He was one of the writers of the Universal History, and, by his intercourse with the bookfellers it was, as I conceive, that Johnson became acquainted with him *.

I mention the above particulars, as well to corroborate those testimonies of Johnson's piety already extant, as to refute the objections of many infidels, who, desirous of having him thought to be of their party,

* For a more particular account of this extraordinary man, see 'the new and general Biographical Dictionary,' in twelve volumes, 8vo. 1774, in articulo.

endeavoured to make it believed, that he was a mere moralist, and that, when writing on religious subjects, he accommodated himself to the notions of the vulgar: and also, because a certain female sceptic, of his acquaintance, was once heard to say, that she was sure Dr. Johnson was too great a philosopher to be a believer.

From this digression, which I mean as an introduction to certain particulars of his behaviour in his last illness, hereafter related, I proceed to the future events of his life. In the year 1781, death put an end to the friendship that, for some years, had subsisted between him and Mr. Thrale, but gave birth to a relation that seemed to be but a continuation of it, viz. that of an executor, the duties of which office involved in it the management of an immense trade, the disposal of a large fortune, and the interests of children rising to maturity. For the trouble it might create him, Mr. Thrale bequeathed to him, as he did to each of his other executors, a legacy of two hundred pounds.

Dr. Johnson was not enough a man of the world to be capable alone of so important a trust. Indeed, it required, for the execution of it, somewhat like a board, a kind of standing council, adapted, by the several qualifications of the individuals that composed it, to all emergencies. Mr. Thrale wisely foresaw this, and associated with Johnson three other persons, men of great experience in business, and of approved worth and integrity. It was easy to see, as Johnson was unskilled in both money and commercial transactions, that Mr. Thrale's view, in constituting him one of his executors, could only be, that, by his philosophical

prudence and sagacity, of which himself had, in some instances, found the benefit*, he might give a general direction to the motions of so vast a machine as they had to conduct. Perhaps he might also think, that the celebrity of Johnson's character would give a lustre to that constellation, in which he had thought proper to place him. This may be called vanity, but it seems to be of the same kind with that which induced Mr. Pope to appoint Mr. Murray, now earl of Mansfield, one of the executors of his will.

No sooner had this trust devolved on him, than he applied to me for advice. He had never been an executor before, and was at a loss in the steps to be taken. I told him the first was proving the will, a term that he understood not. I explained it to him, as also the oath that would be tendered to him, faithfully to execute it, to administer the testator's effects according to law, and to render a true account thereof when required. I told him that in this act he would be joined by the other executors, whom, as they were all men of business, he would do well to follow.

* A few years before Mr. Thrale's death, an emulation arose among the brewers to exceed each other in the magnitude of their vessels for keeping beer to a certain age, probably taking the hint from the great tun at Heidelberg. One of that trade, I think it was Mr. Whitbread, had made one that would hold some thousand barrels, the thought whereof troubled Mr. Thrale, and made him repeat, from Plutarch, a saying of Themistocles, 'The trophies of Miltiades hinder my sleeping;' Johnson, by sober reasoning, quieted him, and prevented his expending a large sum on what could be productive of no real benefit to him or his trade.

Johnson had all his life long been used to lead, to direct, and instruct, and did not much relish the thoughts of following men, who, in all the situations he could conceive, would have looked up to him: he therefore, as he afterwards confessed to me, began to form theories and visionary projects, adapted as well to the continuation and extension of the trade, which, be it remembered, was brewing, as the disposal of it; but in this, as he also acknowledged, he found himself at a loss. The other executors, after reflecting on the difficulty of conducting so large an undertaking, the disagreeableness of an office that would render them, in effect, tax-gatherers, as all of that trade are, and place them in a situation between the public and the revenue, determined to make sale of the whole, and blew up Johnson's schemes for their commencing brewers, into the air. In the carrying this resolution into act, the executors had a great difficulty to encounter: Mr. Thrale's trade had been improving for two generations, and was become of such an enormous magnitude, as nothing but an aggregate of several fortunes was equal to; a circumstance, which could not but affect the intrinsic value of the object, and increase the difficulty of finding purchasers: of things indivisible exposed to sale, an estimate may be formed, till their value rises to a certain amount; but, after that, a considerable abatement from their intrinsic worth must be made, to meet the circumstance of a paucity of purchasers. This was the case in the sale of Pitt's diamond, which, in the ratio by which jewels are valued, was computed to be worth 225,000 l. but, because

only a very few persons were able to purchase it, was sold to the last king of France for little more than 67,000*l*.

This difficulty, great as it was, Mr. Thrale's executors found the way to surmount: they commenced a negociation with some persons of worth and character, which, being conducted on both sides with fairness and candour, terminated in a conveyance of the trade, with all its appendages, for which the consideration was, an hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds. Of this arduous transaction, Johnson was little more than a spectator, and, when called upon to ratify it, he readily acquiesced. There only remained for him to do justice to the memory of him, whom he could not but consider as both his friend and benefactor, and this he did, by an exercise of his talent, in the following monumental inscription:

Hic conditur quod reliquum est
 HENRICI THRALE,
 Qui res seu civiles, seu domesticas, ita egit,
 Ut vitam illi longiorem multi optarent;
 Ita facras,
 Ut quam brevem esset habiturus prescire videretur;
 Simplex, apertus, sibi que semper similis,
 Nihil ostentavit, aut arte fictum, aut cura
 Elaboratum.
 In senatu, regi, patriæque,
 Fideliter studuit;
 Vulgi obstrepentis contemptor animosus:
 Domi inter mille mercaturæ negotia,
 Literarum elegantiam minimè neglexit,
 Amicis, quocunque modo laborantibus,
 Conciliis,

Conciliis, auctoritate, muneribus adfuit.

Inter familiares, comites, convivas, hospites,

Tam facili fuit morum suavitate,

Ut omnium animos ad se alliceret;

Tam felici sermonis libertate,

Ut nulli adulatus, omnibus placeret.

Natus 1724. Ob. 1781.

Confortes tumuli habet Rodolphum patrem,

Strenuum fortemque virum, et Henricum,

Filium unicum, quem spei parentum

Mors inopina decennem

Præripuit.

Ita

Domus felix et opulenta, quam erexit

Avus, auxitque pater, cum nepote decidit.

Abi viator,

Et vicibus rerum humanarum perspectis,

Eternitatem cogita.

The death of Mr. Thrale dissolved the friendship between him and Johnson; but it abated not in the latter, that care for the interests of those whom his friend had left behind him, which he thought himself bound to cherish, as a living principle of gratitude. The favours he had received from Mr. Thrale, were to be repaid by the exercise of kind offices towards his relict and her children, and these, circumstanced as Johnson was, could only be prudent councils, friendly admonition to the one, and preceptive instruction to the others, both which he was ever ready to interpose. Nevertheless, it was observed by myself, and other of Johnson's friends, that, soon after the decease of Mr. Thrale, his visits to Streatham be-

came less and less frequent, and that he studiously avoided the mention of the place or family*.

Having now no calls, and, as I believe, very little temptation, to become a sojourner, or even a guest, in the habitation of his departed friend, he had leisure to indulge himself in excursions to the city of his nativity, as also to Oxford; for both which places he ever entertained an enthusiastic affection. In the former, he was kindly received, and respectfully treated, by Mrs. Lucy Porter, the daughter, by her former husband, of his deceased wife, and in the latter, by the reverend Dr. Adams, who had been his tutor at Pembroke college, and is now the head of that seminary. While he was thus resident in the university, he received daily proofs of the high estimation in which he was there held, by such members of that body as were of the greatest eminence for learning, or were any way distinguished for their natural or acquired abilities.

Besides the places above-mentioned, Johnson had other summer-retreats, to which he was ever welcome, the seats of his friends in the country. At one of these, in the year 1782, he was alarmed by a tumour, by surgeons termed a farcocele, that, as it increased, gave him great pain, and, at length, hurried him to town, with a resolution to submit, if it should be thought necessary, to a dreadful surgical operation; but, on his arrival, one less severe restored him to a

* It seems that between him and the widow there was a formal taking of leave, for I find in his diary the following note: '1783, April 5th, I took leave of Mrs. Thrale. I was much moved. I had some expostulations with her. She said that she was likewise affected. I commended the Thrales with great good will to God; may my petitions have been heard!'

state of perfect ease in the part affected. But he had disorders of another kind to struggle with: he had frequent fits of pain which indicated the passage of a gall-stone, and he now felt the pressure of an asthma, a constitutional disease with him, from which he had formerly been relieved by copious bleedings, but his advanced age forbade the repetition of them.

In the beginning of the year 1782, death deprived him of his old friend and companion; he who had, for near forty years, had the care of his health, and had attended him almost constantly every morning, to enquire after the state of his body, and fill out his tea, the mute, the officious, and the humble Mr. Levett. Of this disastrous event, as soon as it happened, Johnson sent to his friend, Dr. Lawrence, the following account:

‘ SIR,

Jan. 17, 1782.

‘ Our old friend Mr. Levett, who was last night
 ‘ eminently chearful, died this morning. The man
 ‘ who lay in the same room, hearing an uncommon
 ‘ noise, got up, and tried to make him speak, but
 ‘ without effect. He then called Mr. Holder the
 ‘ apothecary, who, though when he came he thought
 ‘ him dead, opened a vein, but could draw no blood.
 ‘ So has ended the long life of a very useful and very
 ‘ blameless man.

‘ I am, Sir,

‘ Your most humble servant,

‘ SAM. JOHNSON.’

I find

I find in one of Johnson's diaries the following note:
 ' January 20, Sunday. Robert Levett was buried
 ' in the church-yard of Bridewell, between one and
 ' two in the afternoon. He died on Thursday 17,
 ' about seven in the morning, by an instantaneous
 ' death. He was an old and faithful friend. I have
 ' known him from about 46. Commendari.—May
 ' God have had mercy on him. May he have mercy
 ' on me !'

The grief which the loss of friends occasioned Johnson, seems to have been a frequent stimulative with him to composition. His sense of Levett's worth he expressed in the following lines, which may, perhaps, contribute, more than any one circumstance in his character, to keep the memory of his existence alive :

1

' Condemn'd to hope's delusive mine,
 ' As on we toil from day to day,
 ' By sudden blast, or slow decline,
 ' Our social comforts drop away.

2

' Well tried through many a varying year,
 ' See Levett to the grave descend ;
 ' Officious, innocent, sincere,
 ' Of every friendless name the friend.

3

' Yet still he fills affection's eye,
 ' Obscurely wise, and coarsely kind,
 ' Nor, letter'd ignorance, deny
 ' Thy praise to merit unrefin'd.

' When

4

- ‘ When fainting nature call’d for aid,
- ‘ And hov’ring death prepar’d the blow,
- ‘ The vig’rous remedy display’d,
- ‘ The power of art, without the show.

5

- ‘ In mis’ry’s darkeſt caverns known,
- ‘ His uſeful care was ever nigh ;
- ‘ Where hopeleſs anguiſh pour’d his groan,
- ‘ And lonely want retir’d to die.

6

- ‘ No ſummons mock’d by chill delay ;
- ‘ No petty gain diſdain’d by pride :
- ‘ The modeſt wants of ev’ry day,
- ‘ The toil of ev’ry day ſupply’d.

7

- ‘ His virtues walk’d their narrow round,
- ‘ Nor made a pauſe, nor left a void ;
- ‘ And ſure the eternal Maſter found
- ‘ The ſingle talent well employ’d.

8

- ‘ The buſy day, the peaceful night,
- ‘ Unfelt, uncounted, glided by :
- ‘ His frame was firm, his pow’rs were bright,
- ‘ Though now his eightieth year was nigh.

‘ Then

‘ Then with no throb of fiery pain,
 ‘ No cold gradations of decay,
 ‘ Death broke at once the vital chain,
 ‘ And freed his soul the nearest way.’

About the middle of June 1783, his constitution sustained a severer shock than it had ever before felt: this was a stroke of the palsy, so very sudden and severe, that it awakened him out of a sound sleep, and rendered him, for a short time, speechless. As it had not affected his intellectual powers, he, in that cumbent posture to which he was confined, attempted to repeat, first in English, then in Latin, and afterwards in Greek, the Lord’s Prayer, but succeeded in only the last effort, immediately after which, finding himself again bereft of the power of speech, he rang for his servant, and making signs for pen, ink, and paper, wrote and sent the following note to his friend and next-door neighbour, Mr. Allen the printer.

‘ Dear Sir,

‘ It hath pleased Almighty God this morning to
 ‘ deprive me of the powers of speech; and, as I do
 ‘ not know but that it may be his farther good plea-
 ‘ sure to deprive me soon of my senses, I request
 ‘ you will, on the receipt of this note, come to me,
 ‘ and act for me, as the exigencies of my case may
 ‘ require.

‘ I am, sincerely,

‘ Your’s,

‘ S. JOHNSON.’

Mr.

Mr. Allen immediately rose to his assistance, and, in the morning, dispatched a message to Dr. Heberden and Dr. Brocklesby, who, in a few days, so far relieved him, that his speech became, to a good degree, articulate, and, till his organs began to tire, he was able to hold conversation. By the skill and attention of these two worthy persons, he was, at length, restored to such a degree of health that, on the 27th of the same month, he was able to water his garden, and had no remaining symptoms of disease, excepting that his legs were observed to be swoln, and he had some presages of an hydropic affection. These gave him some concern, and induced him to note, more particularly than he had formerly done*, the variations of the state of his health.

But bodily afflictions were not the only trials he had to undergo. He had been a mourner for many friends, and was now in danger of losing one, who had not only cheered him in his solitude, and helped him to pass with comfort those hours which, otherwise, would have been irksome to him, but had relieved him from domestic cares, regulated and watched over the expences of his house, and kept at a distance some of those necessitous visitants, towards whom his bounty, though it had seldom wrought any good, had often been exercised.

* Of his being seized with the palsy, I find in his diary the following note:

‘ June 16. I went to bed, and, as I conceive, about 3 in the morning, I had a stroke of the palsy.

‘ 17. I sent for Dr. Heberden and Dr. Brocklesby. God blefs them.

‘ 25. Dr. Heberden took leave.’

This

This person was Mrs. Williams, whose calamitous history is related among the events recorded in the foregoing pages. She had for some months been declining, and during the doctor's late illness was confined to her bed. The restoration of his health made it necessary for him to retire into the country; but, before his departure, he composed and made use of the following energetic prayer.

‘ Almighty God, who, in thy late visitation, hast
 ‘ shewn mercy to me, and now sendest to my com-
 ‘ panion disease and decay, grant me grace so to
 ‘ employ the life which thou hast prolonged, and
 ‘ the faculties which thou hast preserved, and so
 ‘ to receive the admonition, which the sickness of
 ‘ my friend, by thy appointment, gives me, that I
 ‘ may be constant in all holy duties, and be re-
 ‘ ceived at last to eternal happiness.

‘ Permit, O Lord, thy unworthy creature to offer
 ‘ up this prayer for Anna Williams, now languishing
 ‘ upon her bed, and about to recommend herself to
 ‘ thy infinite mercy. O God, who desirest not the
 ‘ death of a sinner, look down with mercy upon her:
 ‘ forgive her sins, and strengthen her faith. Be
 ‘ merciful, O Father of mercy, to her and to me:
 ‘ guide us by thy holy spirit through the remaining
 ‘ part of life; support us in the hour of death, and
 ‘ pardon us in the day of judgment, for Jesus Christ's
 ‘ sake. Amen.’

During his absence from London, viz. on the sixth day of September 1783, Mrs. Williams was released from all her cares and troubles by an easy death, for which she was well prepared. The last offices were performed for her by those of her friends who were
 about

about her in the time of her illness, and had administered to her all the assistance in their power.

At his return to London, Johnson found himself in a forlorn and helpless condition: his habitual melancholy had now a real subject to work on, and represented his house as a dreary mansion. Solitude was ever ungrateful to him, and the want of a companion, with whom he might pass his evening hours, often drove him to seek relief in the conversation of persons in all respects his inferiors. To talk much, and to be well attended to, was, throughout his life, his chief delight: his vein of discourse, which has often enough been described, was calculated to attract the applause, and even admiration, of small circles; to him, therefore, a confraternity of persons, assembled for the purpose of free communication, or, in other words, a club, could not but be a source of pleasure, and he now projected one, which will hereafter be described. In every association of this kind, he was sure, unless by concession, to preside, and, *ex cathedra*, to discuss the subjects of enquiry and debate.

The death of Mr. Thrale, and Johnson's estrangement from the dwelling and family of this his valued friend, have already been mentioned: it remains to say of this event, that it was not followed by a total oblivion, on the part of his relict, of the intimacy that had subsisted between him and her husband, it appearing, that an intercourse by letters was still kept up between them. It was, nevertheless, easy to discover by his conversation, that he no longer looked on himself as a welcome guest at Streatham, and that he did but ill brook the change in his course of life that he now experienced. He had, for near twenty years, participated

icipated in most of those enjoyments that make wealth and affluence desirable; had partaken, in common with their owners, of the delights of a villa, and the convenience of an equipage; and had been entertained with a variety of amusements and occupations. In short, during the whole of that period, his life had been as happy as it had been in the power of such persons to make it.

That this celebrated friendship subsisted so long as it did, was a subject of wonder to most of Johnson's intimates, for such were his habits of living, that he was by no means a desirable inmate. His unmanly thirst for tea made him very troublesome. At Streatham, he would suffer the mistress of the house to sit up and make it for him, till two or three hours after midnight. When retired to rest, he indulged himself in the dangerous practice of reading in bed. It was a very hard matter to get him decently dressed by dinner-time, even when select companies were invited; and no one could be sure, that in his table-conversation with strangers, he would not, by contradiction, or the general asperity of his behaviour, offend them.

These irregularities were not only borne with by Mr. Thrale, but he seemed to think them amply atoned for by the honour he derived from such a guest as no table in the three kingdoms could produce; but, he dying, it was not likely that the same sentiments and opinions should descend to those of his family who were left behind. Such a friendly connection and correspondence as I have just mentioned, continued, however, between Johnson and the widow, till it was interrupted by an event that will shortly be related.

I have

I have in his diary met with fundry notes, signifying that, while he was at Streatham, he endeavoured, by reading, to acquire a knowledge of the Dutch language, but that his progress in the study thereof was very slow.

It has been already related that, being seized with a paralysis about the month of June 1783, he was so far recovered therefrom, as to entertain a hope, that he had nearly worn out all his disorders. ‘What a man am I!’ said he to me, in the month of November following, ‘who have got the better of three diseases, the palsy, the gout, and the asthma, and can now enjoy the conversation of my friends, without the interruptions of weakness or pain!’—To these flattering testimonies I must add, that in this seeming spring-tide of his health and spirits, he wrote me the following note :

‘Dear SIR,

‘As Mr. Ryland was talking with me of old friends and past times, we warmed ourselves into a wish, that all who remained of the club should meet and dine at the house which once was Horseman’s, in Ivy lane. I have undertaken to solicit you, and therefore desire you to tell on what day next week you can conveniently meet your old friends.

‘I am, Sir,

‘Your most humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘Bolt court, Nov. 22, 1783.’

Our intended meeting was prevented by a circumstance, which the following note will explain :

‘ Dear SIR,

‘ In perambulating Ivy lane, Mr. Ryland found
 ‘ neither our landlord Horseman, nor his successor.
 ‘ The old house is shut up, and he liked not the
 ‘ appearance of any near it: he, therefore, bespoke
 ‘ our dinner at the Queen’s Arms, in St. Paul’s
 ‘ church yard, where, at half an hour after three,
 ‘ your company will be desired to-day, by those
 ‘ who remain of our former society.

‘ Your humble servant,

‘ Dec. 3.’

‘ SAM. JOHNSON.

With this invitation I chearfully complied, and met, at the time and place appointed, all who could be mustered of our society, namely, Johnson, Mr. Ryland, and Mr. Payne of the bank. When we were collected, the thought that we were so few, occasioned some melancholy reflections, and I could not but compare our meeting, at such an advanced period of life as it was to us all, to that of the four old men in the ‘Senile Colloquium’ of Erasmus. We dined, and in the evening regaled with coffee. At ten, we broke up, much to the regret of Johnson, who proposed staying; but finding us inclined to separate, he left us, with a sigh that seemed to come from his heart, lamenting that he was retiring to solitude and chearless meditation.

Johnson had proposed a meeting, like this, once a month, and we had one more; but, the time approaching for a third, he began to feel a return of some of his complaints, and signified a wish, that we would dine with him at his own house; and, accordingly, we met there, and were very chearfully entertained by him.

A few

A few days after, he sent for me, and informed me, that he had discovered in himself the symptoms of a dropfy, and, indeed, his very much increased bulk, and the swoln appearance of his legs, seemed to indicate no less. He told me, that he was desirous of making a will, and requested me to be one of his executors: upon my consenting to take on me the office, he gave me to understand, that he meant to make a provision for his servant Frank, of about 70l. a year for life, and concerted with me a plan for investing a sum sufficient for the purpose: at the same time he opened to me the state of his circumstances, and the amount of what he had to dispose of.

In a visit, which I made him in a few days, in consequence of a very pressing request to see me, I found him labouring under great dejection of mind. He bade me draw near him, and said, he wanted to enter into a serious conversation with me; and, upon my expressing a willingness to join in it, he, with a look that cut me to the heart, told me, that he had the prospect of death before him, and that he dreaded to meet his Saviour. I could not but be astonished at such a declaration, and advised him, as I had done once before, to reflect on the course of his life, and the services he had rendered to the cause of religion and virtue, as well by his example, as his writings; to which he answered, that he had written as a philosopher, but had not lived like one. In the estimation of his offences, he reasoned thus—‘Every man knows his
 ‘ own sins, and also, what grace he has resisted. But,
 ‘ to those of others, and the circumstances under which
 ‘ they were committed, he is a stranger: he is, there-
 ‘ fore, to look on himself as the greatest sinner that

‘ he knows of*.’ At the conclusion of this argument, which he strongly enforced, he uttered this passionate exclamation,—‘ Shall I, who have been a teacher of others, myself be a castaway ?’

Much to the same purpose passed between us in this and other conversations that I had with him, in all which I could not but wonder, as much at the freedom with which he opened his mind, and the compunction he seemed to feel for the errors of his past life, as I did, at his making choice of me for his confessor, knowing full well how meanly qualified I was for such an office.

It was on a Thursday that I had this conversation with him; and here, let not the supercilious lip of scorn protrude itself, while I relate that, in the course thereof, he declared his intention to devote the whole of the next day to fasting, humiliation, and such other devotional exercises, as became a man in his situation. On the Saturday following, I made him a visit, and, upon entering his room, observed in his countenance such a serenity, as indicated that some remarkable crisis of his disorder had produced a change in his feelings. He told me, that, pursuant to the resolution he had mentioned to me, he had spent the preceding day in an abstraction from all worldly concerns; that, to prevent interruption, he had, in the morning, ordered Frank not to admit any one to him, and, the better to enforce the charge, had added these awful words, ‘ For your master is preparing himself to die.’ He then mentioned to me, that, in the

* I find the above sentiment in Law’s Serious call to a devout and holy life, a book which Johnson was very conversant with, and often commended.

course of this exercise, he found himself relieved from that disorder which had been growing on him, and was become very oppressing, the dropfy, by a gradual evacuation of water to the amount of twenty pints, a like instance whereof he had never before experienced, and asked me what I thought of it.

I was well aware of the lengths that superstition and enthusiasm will lead men, and how ready some are to attribute favourable events to supernatural causes, and said, that it might favour of presumption to say that, in this instance, God had wrought a miracle; yet, as divines recognize certain dispensations of his providence, recorded in the Scripture by the denomination of returns of prayer, and his omnipotence is now the same as ever, I thought it would be little less than criminal, to ascribe his late relief to causes merely natural, and, that the safer opinion was, that he had not in vain humbled himself before his Maker. He seemed to acquiesce in all that I said on this important subject, and, several times, while I was discoursing with him, cried out, ‘ It is wonderful, very wonderful !’

His zeal for religion, as manifested in his writings and conversation, and the accounts extant that attest his piety, have induced the enemies to his memory to tax him with superstition. To that charge, I oppose his behaviour on this occasion, and leave it to the judgment of sober and rational persons, whether such an unexpected event, as that above-mentioned, would not have prompted a really superstitious man, to some more passionate exclamation, than that it was wonderful *.

He

* Doubtless there are men who look upon all religious exercises

He had no sooner experienced the ease and comfort which followed from the remarkable event above-mentioned, than he began to entertain a hope, that he had got the better of that disease which most oppressed him, and that length of days might yet be his portion; he, therefore, sought for a relief from that solitude, to which the loss of Mrs. Williams and others of his domestic companions, seemed to have doomed him; and, in the same spirit that induced him to attempt the revival of the Ivy lane club, set about the establishment of another. I was not made privy to this his intention, but, all circumstances considered, it was no matter of surprise to me when I heard, as I did from a friend of mine, that the great Dr. Johnson had, in the month of December 1783, formed a six-penny club, at an ale-house in Essex-street, and that, though some of the members thereof were persons of note, strangers, under restrictions, for three pence each night, might, three nights in a week, hear him talk, and partake of his conversation. I soon afterwards learned from the doctor, the nature of, as also the motives to this institution, which, as to him, was novel, in this respect, that, as the presidency

as superstition, and upon prayer and other acts of devotion, as evidences of a weak mind. These say, that reason is a sufficient rule of action, and that God needs not to be supplicated, nor requires our thanks. Of this class of infidels I take Annet to have been one: he who wrote against the miracles, and was some years ago convicted of blasphemy, and sentenced to imprisonment. The wife of Jackson, the bookseller, in Clare court, Drury lane, a man well known by the collectors of old books and pamphlets, once told me, that this man would often call in at their shop, and if he happened to see a bible lying on the counter, would intreat her to take it away, for that he could not bear the sight of it.

passed

passed in rotation, he was oftner excluded from, than entitled to enjoy, that pre-eminence which, at all times, and in all convivial assemblies, was considered as his right.

The more intimate of Johnson's friends looked on this establishment, both as a sorry expedient to kill time, and a degradation of those powers which had administered delight to circles, composed of persons, of both sexes, distinguished as well by their rank, as by their talents for polite conversation. It was a mortification to them, to associate in idea the clink of the tankard, with moral disquisition and literary investigation; and many of them were led to question whether that pleasure could be very great, which he had rendered so cheap: they, however, concealed their sentiments, and, from motives of mere compassion, suffered him to enjoy a comfort, which was now become almost the only one of which he was capable; and this he did for the short space of about ten months, when the increase of his complaints obliged him to forego it.

I have now brought him to the seventy-fifth year of his age, and the last of his life, in which two remarkable events occurred, the one whereof gave him great uneasiness, and the other, though much talked of, little or none. The time I am speaking of, is the year 1784, by about the middle whereof, he was, to appearance, so well recovered, that both himself and his friends hoped, that he had some years to live. He had recovered from the paralytic stroke of the last year, to such a degree, that, saving a little difficulty in his articulation, he had no remains of it: he had also undergone a slight fit of the gout, and

conquered an oppression on his lungs, so as to be able, as himself told me, to run up the whole stair-case of the Royal Academy, on the day of the annual dinner there. In short, to such a degree of health was he restored, that he forgot all his complaints: he resumed sitting to Opie for his picture, which had been begun the year before, but, I believe, was never finished, and accepted an invitation to the house of a friend, at Ashbourn in Derbyshire, proposing to stay there till towards the end of the summer, and, in his return, to visit Mrs. Porter, his daughter-in-law, and others of his friends, at Lichfield.

A few weeks before his setting out, he was made uneasy by a report, that the widow of his friend Mr. Thrale was about to dispose of herself in marriage to a foreigner, a singer by profession, and with him to quit the kingdom. Upon this occasion he took the alarm, and to prevent a degradation of herself, and, what as executor of her husband was more his concern, the desertion of her children, wrote to her, she then being at Bath, a letter, a spurious copy whereof, beginning ‘If you are not already ignominiously married,’ is inserted in the Gentleman’s Magazine for December 1784. That this letter is spurious, as to the language, I have Johnson’s own authority for saying; but, in respect of the sentiments, he avowed it, in a declaration to me, that not a sentence of it was his, but yet, that it was an *adumbration* of one that he wrote upon the occasion. It may, therefore, be suspected, that some one who had heard him repeat the contents of the letter, had given it to the public in the form in which it appeared.

What answer was returned to his friendly monition,
I know

I know not, but it seems that it was succeeded by a letter of greater length, written, as it afterwards appeared, too late to do any good, in which he expressed an opinion, that the person to whom it was addressed had forfeited her fame. The answer to this I have seen: it is written from Bath, and contains an indignant vindication as well of her conduct as her fame, an inhibition of Johnson from following her to Bath, and a farewell, concluding—‘Till you have changed your opinion of —— let us converse no more.’

In this transaction, Johnson seemed to have forgotten the story of the Ephesian Matron, related by Petronius, but was, by this time, convinced that, in his endeavours to prevent an attachment, which he foresaw would be prejudicial to the interests of his friend’s children, and fix an indelible disgrace on their mother, who was about to abandon them and her country, he had been labouring to hedge in the cuckow. From the style of the letter, a conclusion was to be drawn, that baffled all the powers of reasoning and persuasion:

‘One argument she summ’d up all in,

‘The thing was done, and past recalling*;

which being the case, he contented himself with reflecting on what he had done to prevent that which he thought one of the greatest evils that could befall the progeny of his friend, the alienation of the affections of their mother. He looked upon the desertion of children by their parents, and the withdrawing from them that protection, that mental nutriment which, in their youth, they are capable of receiving, the exposing them to the snares and temptations of

* Pope and Swift’s Miscellanies, ‘Phyllis or the Progress of love.’

the world, and the solicitations and deceits of the artful and designing, as most unnatural; and, in a letter on the subject to me, written from Ashbourn, thus delivered his sentiments:

‘ Poor Thrale! I thought that either her virtue or her vice,’ [meaning, as I understood, by the former, the love of her children, and, by the latter, her pride,] ‘ would have restrained her from such a marriage. She is now become a subject for her enemies to exult over, and for her friends, if she has any left, to forget or pity.’

In the mention of the above particulars, it is far from my design to reprehend the conduct of the lady to whom they relate. Being her own mistress, she had a right to dispose of herself, and is unamenable to any known judicature. Johnson, in his relation of executor to her husband, as also in gratitude to his memory, was under an obligation to promote the welfare of his family. It was also his duty, as far as he was able, to avert an evil which threatened their interests. What he endeavoured, for that purpose, is part of his history, and, as such only, I relate it.

While Dr. Johnson was in the country, his friends in town were labouring for his benefit. Mr. Thrale, a short time before his death, had meditated a journey to Italy, and formed a party, in which Johnson was included, but the design never took effect. It was now conceived, by Johnson’s friends, that a foreign air would contribute to the restoration of his health; and his inclination concurring with their sentiments, a plan was formed for his visiting the continent, attended with a male-servant. The only obstacle to the journey was, an apprehension, that the expence of it would be greater

greater than his income would bear; and, to get over this difficulty, Sir Joshua Reynolds undertook to solicit an addition of 200l. to his pension, and to that end, applied to lord Thurlow, who, as the public have been fully informed, exerted his endeavours for the purpose, but the application failing, he declared himself willing, upon the security of that pension of which Johnson was in possession, to advance him 500l *. This generous offer Johnson thought proper to decline by a letter, of which the following is an authentic copy, being taken from his own draft now in my hands.

‘ My LORD,

‘ After a long and not inattentive observation of
 ‘ mankind, the generosity of your lordship’s offer
 ‘ raises in me not less wonder than gratitude. Bounty,
 ‘ so liberally bestowed, I should gladly receive, if
 ‘ my condition made it necessary, for, to such a mind,
 ‘ who would not be proud to own his obligations?
 ‘ But it has pleased God to restore me to so great a
 ‘ measure of health, that if I should now appropriate
 ‘ so much of a fortune destined to do good, I could
 ‘ not escape from myself the charge of advancing a
 ‘ false claim. My journey to the continent, though
 ‘ I once thought it necessary, was never much encour-
 ‘ aged by my physicians; and I was very desirous

* The offer above-mentioned has, in the first view of it, the appearance rather of a commercial than a gratuitous transaction; but Sir Joshua clearly understood at the making it, that lord Thurlow designedly put it in that form: he was fearful that Johnson’s high spirit would induce him to reject it as a donation, but thought that, in the way of a loan, it might be accepted.

‘ that

‘ that your lordship should be told of it by Sir
 ‘ Joshua Reynolds, as an event very uncertain, for,
 ‘ if I grew much better, I should not be willing, if
 ‘ much worse, I should not be able, to migrate.—
 ‘ Your lordship was first solicited without my know-
 ‘ ledge; but, when I was told, that you were pleased
 ‘ to honour me with your patronage, I did not ex-
 ‘ pect to hear of a refusal; yet, as I have had no
 ‘ long time to brood hope, and have not rioted in
 ‘ imaginary opulence, this cold reception has been
 ‘ scarce a disappointment; and, from your lordship’s
 ‘ kindness, I have received a benefit, which only men
 ‘ like you are able to bestow. I shall now live mihi
 ‘ carior, with a higher opinion of my own merit.

‘ I am, my lord,

‘ Your lordship’s most obliged,

‘ Most grateful,

‘ And most humble servant,

‘ Sept. 1784.

SAM. JOHNSON.’

An incorrect copy of the above letter, though of
 a private nature, found its way into the public pa-
 pers * in this manner. It was given to Sir Joshua
 Reynolds, unsealed, to be delivered to lord Thurlow.
 Sir Joshua, looking upon it as a handsome testimony
 of gratitude, and, as it related to a transaction in
 which he had concerned himself, took a copy of it,
 and shewed it to a few of his friends. Among these,
 was a lady of quality, who, having heard it read, the
 next day desired to be gratified with the perusal of it
 at home: the use she made of this favour was, the
 copying and sending it to one of the news-papers,

* Among the corruptions in the printed copies, are the words,
you was pleased, for you were pleased, and rested for rioted.

whence it was taken and inserted in others, as also in the Gentleman's and many other Magazines. Johnson, upon being told that it was in print, exclaimed in my hearing—'I am betrayed,'—but soon after forgot, as he was ever ready to do all real or supposed injuries, the error that made the publication possible.

Dr. Brocklesby was one of those physicians who would not encourage Johnson in a wish to visit the continent; nevertheless, to console him for his late disappointment, and that the supposed narrowness of his circumstances might be no hindrance to such a design, he made him a voluntary offer of 100*l.* a year, payable quarterly, towards his support abroad, but could not prevail on him to accept it*.

* Actuated by a like spirit of beneficence, the same person, by his interest with his friends, and in conjunction with that christian-like jew, Sampson Gideon, procured a contribution, amounting to upwards of 100*l.* a year, for the support, during the remaining years of his life, of old captain Coram, the original mover in the establishment of the Foundling-hospital. Upon Dr. Brocklesby's applying to the good old man, to know whether his setting on foot a subscription for his benefit would not offend him, he received this noble answer:—'I have not wasted
' the little wealth, of which I was formerly possessed, in self-indul-
' gence, or vain expences, and am not ashamed to confess, that in
' this my old age I am poor.'—Upon the death of Coram, this pension was continued to Leveridge, a worn-out singer at the theatres, who, at the age of ninety, had scarce any other prospect than that of a parish subsistence.

Those writers on morality, such as Hobbes and Mandeville, who resolve all beneficence into self-love, would be hard put to it to reconcile such acts as these with their tenets. They would say, that the motive to them was a desire to get rid of those sensations which the distresses of others are apt to excite, and, by consequence, that the exertions of beneficence are selfish. Never considering that, before these sensations can arise, a man must be kindly affectioned to his fellow-creatures, and possess that benevolence which the objection supposes to be wanting.

His

His excursion to Ashbourn was less beneficial than he hoped it would be: his disorders began to return, and he wanted company and amusement. During his stay there, he composed sundry prayers, adapted to the state of his body and mind; and translated from Horace, lib. IV. the ode, ‘*Diffugère nives, redeunt jam gramina campis,*’ in the words following:

- ‘ The snow, dissolv’d, no more is seen;
- ‘ The fields and woods, behold, are green;
- ‘ The changing year renews the plain;
- ‘ The rivers know their banks again;
- ‘ The sprightly nymph and naked grace
- ‘ The mazy dance together trace:
- ‘ The changing year’s successive plan,
- ‘ Proclaims mortality to Man.
- ‘ Rough winter’s blasts to spring give way;
- ‘ Spring yields to summer’s sovereign ray;
- ‘ Then summer sinks in autumn’s reign;
- ‘ And winter chills the world again;
- ‘ Her losses soon the moon supplies,
- ‘ But wretched Man, when once he lies
- ‘ Where Priam and his sons are laid,
- ‘ Is nought but ashes and a shade.
- ‘ Who knows if Jove, who counts our score,
- ‘ Will rouse us in a morning more?
- ‘ What with your friend you nobly share,
- ‘ At least you rescue from your heir.
- ‘ Not you, Torquatus, boast of Rome,
- ‘ When Minos once has fix’d your doom,
- ‘ Or eloquence, or splendid birth,
- ‘ Or virtue shall replace on earth:

‘ Hippolytus

- ‘ Hippolytus unjustly slain,
- ‘ Diana calls to life in vain ;
- ‘ Nor can the might of Theseus rend
- ‘ The chains of hell that hold his friend.’

Nov. 1784.

In his return to London, he stopped at Lichfield, and from thence wrote to me several letters, that served but to prepare me for meeting him in a worse state of health than I had ever seen him in. The concluding paragraph of the last of them is as follows: ‘ I am relapsing into the dropsy very fast, and shall ‘ make such haste to town that it will be useless to ‘ write to me ; but when I come, let me have the ‘ benefit of your advice, and the consolation of your ‘ company.’ [dated Nov. 7, 1784.] After about a fortnight’s stay there, he took his leave of that city, and of Mrs. Porter, whom he never afterwards saw, and arrived in town on the sixteenth day of November.

After the declaration he had made of his intention to provide for his servant Frank, and before his going into the country, I had frequently pressed him to make a will, and had gone so far as to make a draft of one, with blanks for the names of the executors and residuary legatee, and directing in what manner it was to be executed and attested ; but he was exceedingly averse to this business ; and, while he was in Derbyshire, I repeated my solicitations, for this purpose, by letters. When he arrived in town, he had done nothing in it, and, to what I formerly said, I now added, that he had never mentioned to me the disposal of the residue of his estate, which, after

after the purchase of an annuity for Frank, I found would be something considerable, and that he would do well to bequeath it to his relations. His answer was, 'I care not what becomes of the residue.'—— A few days after, it appeared that he had executed the draft, the blanks remaining, with all the solemnities of a real will. I could get him no farther, and thus, for some time, the matter rested.

He had scarce arrived in town, before it was found to be too true, that he was relapsing into a dropfy; and farther, that he was at times grievously afflicted with an asthma. Under an apprehension that his end was approaching, he enquired of Dr. Brocklesby, with great earnestness indeed, how long he might probably live, but could obtain no other than unsatisfactory answers: and, at the same time, if I remember right, under a seeming great pressure of mind, he thus addressed him, in the words of Shakespeare:

'Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd;
'Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
'Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
'And with some sweet oblivious antidote,
'Cleanse the full bosom of that perilous stuff,
'Which weighs upon the heart?'——

MACBETH.

To which the doctor, who was nearly as well read in the above author as himself, readily replied,

'————— Therein the patient
'Must minister unto himself.'

Upon which Johnson exclaimed — 'Well applied:—
'that's more than poetically true.'

He

He had, from the month of July in this year, marked the progress of his diseases, in a journal which he intitled 'Ægri Ephemeris,' noting therein his many sleepless nights by the words, Nox infomnis. This he often contemplated, and, finding very little ground for hope that he had much longer to live, he set himself to prepare for his dissolution, and betook himself to private prayer and the reading of Erasmus on the New Testament, Dr. Clarke's sermons, and such other books as had a tendency to calm and comfort him.

In this state of his body and mind, he seemed to be very anxious in the discharge of two offices that he had hitherto neglected to perform: one was, the communicating to the world the names of the persons concerned in the compilation of the Universal History; the other was, the rescuing from oblivion the memory of his father and mother, and also, of his brother: the former of these he discharged, by delivering to Mr. Nichols the printer, in my presence, a paper containing the information above-mentioned, and directions to deposit it in the British museum. The other, by composing a memorial of his deceased parents and his brother, intended for their tomb-stone, which, whether it was ever inscribed thereon or not, is extant in the Gentleman's Magazine for January 1785. The note ascertaining the names of the compilers of the Universal History, is inserted in the Magazine for the preceding month. The monumental inscription is as follows:

H. S. E.

M I C H A E L J O H N S O N,

Vir impavidus, constans, animosus, periculorum immemor, laborum patientissimus; fiduciâ christianâ,

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fortis,

fortis, fervidusque, pater-familias apprimè strenuus; bibliopola admodum peritus; mente et libris et negotiis exulta; animo ita firmo, ut, rebus adversis diu conflictatus, nec sibi nec suis defuerit: lingua sic temperata, ut ei nihil quod aures, vel pias, vel castas læsisset, aut dolor, vel voluptas unquam exprefferit.

Natus Cubleixæ, in agro Derbieni, anno MDC LVI. obiit MDCCXXXI.

Apposita est S A R A, conjux,

Antiqua F O R D O R U M gente oriunda; quam domi sedulam, foris paucis notam; nulli molestant, mentis acumine et judicii subtilitate præcellentem; aliis multum, sibi parum indulgentem: Æternitati semper attentam, omne fere virtutis nomen commendavit.

Nata Nortoniæ Regis, in agro Varvicensi, anno MDC LXIX; obiit MDCC LIX.

Cum N A T H A N A E L E illorum filio, qui natus MDCCXII, cum vires, et animi, et corporis multa pollicerentur, anno MDCCXXXVII, vitam brevem piâ morte finivit.

He would also have written, in Latin verse, an epitaph for Mr. Garrick, but found himself unequal to the task of original poetic composition in that language.

Nevertheless, he succeeded in an attempt to render into Latin metre, from the Greek Anthologia, sundry of the epigrams therein contained, that had been omitted by other translators, alledging as a reason, which he had found in Fabricius, that Henry Stephens, Buchanan, Grotius, and others, had paid a like tribute to literature.

literature*. The performance of this task was the employment of his sleepless nights, and, as he informed me, it afforded him great relief.

His complaints still increasing, I continued pressing him to make a will, but he still procrastinated that business. On the twenty-seventh of November, in the morning, I went to his house, with a purpose still farther to urge him not to give occasion, by dying intestate, for litigation among his relations; but finding that he was gone to pass the day with the reverend Mr. Strahan, at Islington, I followed him thither, and found there our old friend Mr. Ryland, and Mr. Hoole. Upon my sitting down, he said, that the prospect of the change he was about to undergo, and the thought of meeting his Saviour, troubled him, but that he had hope that he would not reject him. I then began to discourse with him about his will, and the provision for Frank, till he grew angry. He told me, that he had signed and sealed the paper I left him;—but that, said I, had blanks in it, which, as it seems, you have not filled up with the names of the executors.——‘You should have filled them up yourself,’ answered he.——I replied, that such an act would have looked as if I meant to prevent his choice of a fitter person.——‘Sir,’ said he, ‘these minor virtues are not to be exercised in matters of such importance as this.’——At length, he said, that on his return home, he would send for a clerk, and dictate a will to him.——You will then, said I, be inops consilii; rather do it now.

* To these may be added, the examples of Sir Thomas More and Lily the grammarian, both of whose translations are published among Sir Thomas More’s epigrams.

With Mr. Strahan's permission, I will be his guest at dinner; and, if Mr. Hoole will please to hold the pen, I will, in a few words, make such a disposition of your estate as you shall direct.—To this he assented; but such a paroxysm of the asthma seized him, as prevented our going on. As the fire burned up, he found himself relieved, and grew chearful. 'The fit,' said he, 'was very sharp; but I am now easy.' After I had dictated a few lines, I told him, that the ancient form of wills contained a profession of the faith of the testator; and that, he being a man of eminence for learning and parts, it would afford an illustrious example, and well become him, to make such an explicit declaration of his belief, as might obviate all suspicions that he was any other than a Christian*. He thanked me for the hint, and, calling for paper, wrote on a slip, that I had in my hand and gave him, the following words: 'I humbly com-
'mit to the infinite and eternal goodness of Almighty
'God, my soul polluted with many sins; but, as I
'hope, purified by repentance, and redeemed, as I
'trust, by the death of Jesus Christ;' and, returning it to me, said, 'This I commit to your custody.'

* After the Roman empire became Christian, not only the testaments of dying men, but the imperial edicts, began with an invocation of the name of God, or of the holy and undivided Trinity. The institutes of Justinian begin 'In nomine Domini nostri Jesu Christi;' and, till lately, the address of grants and charters has been 'To all Christian people.' Vide Sir Henry Spelman of antient Deeds and Charters, among his English works. A few years ago it was the uniform practice to begin wills with the words, 'In the name of God, amen;' and frequently to insert therein a declaration of the testator's hope of pardon in the merits of his Saviour; but, in these more refined times, such forms are deemed superfluous.

Upon my calling on him for directions to proceed, he told me, that his father, in the course of his trade of a bookfeller, had become bankrupt, and that Mr. William Innys had assisted him with money or credit to continue his business—‘ This,’ said he, ‘ I consider
 ‘ as an obligation on me to be grateful to his descen-
 ‘ dants, and I therefore mean to give 200l. to his re-
 ‘ presentative.’—He then meditated a devise of his house at Lichfield to the corporation of that city for a charitable use; but, it being freehold, he said—‘ I
 ‘ cannot live a twelve-month, and the last statute of
 ‘ mortmain* stands in the way: I must, therefore,
 ‘ think of some other disposition of it.’——His next consideration was, a provision for Frank, concerning the amount whereof I found he had been consulting Dr. Brocklesby, to whom he had put this question—
 ‘ What would be a proper annuity to bequeath to a
 ‘ favourite servant?’—The doctor answered, that the circumstances of the master were the truest measure, and that, in the case of a nobleman, 50l. a year was deemed an adequate reward for many years’ faithful service.——‘ Then, shall I,’ said Johnson, ‘ be
 ‘ nobilissimus; for, I mean to leave Frank 70l. a
 ‘ year, and I desire you to tell him so.’—And now, at the making of the will, a devise, equivalent to such a provision, was therein inserted. The residue of his estate and effects, which took in, though he intended it not, the house at Lichfield, he bequeathed to his executors, in trust for a religious association, which it is needless to describe.

* Viz. 9 Geo. 2. cap. 36, which enacts, that no lands, tenements, &c. shall be given to any bodies politic, unless by deed indented, made twelve months, at least, before the death of the donor.

Having executed the will with the necessary formalities, he would have come home, but being pressed by Mr. and Mrs. Strahan to stay, he consented, and we all dined together. Towards the evening, he grew chearful, and I having promised to take him in my coach, Mr. Strahan and Mr. Ryland would accompany him home. In the way thither he appeared much at ease, and told stories. At eight I set him down, and Mr. Strahan and Mr. Ryland betook themselves to their respective homes.

Sunday 28th. I saw him about noon; he was dozing; but waking, he found himself in a circle of his friends. Upon opening his eyes, he said, that the prospect of his dissolution was very terrible to him, and addressed himself to us all, in nearly these words: ‘ You see the state in which I am; conflicting
 ‘ with bodily pain and mental distraction: while you
 ‘ are in health and strength, labour to do good, and
 ‘ avoid evil, if ever you hope to escape the distress
 ‘ that now oppresses me.’——A little while after,—
 ‘ I had, very early in my life, the seeds of goodness
 ‘ in me: I had a love of virtue, and a reverence for
 ‘ religion; and these, I trust, have brought forth in
 ‘ me fruits meet for repentance; and, if I have re-
 ‘ pented as I ought, I am forgiven. I have, at times,
 ‘ entertained a loathing of sin and of myself, parti-
 ‘ cularly at the beginning of this year, when I had
 ‘ the prospect of death before me; and this has not
 ‘ abated when my fears of death have been less;
 ‘ and, at these times, I have had such rays of hope
 ‘ shot into my soul, as have almost persuaded me,
 ‘ that I am in a state of reconciliation with God.’

29th. Mr. Langton, who had spent the evening with him, reported, that his hopes were increased, and that he was much cheered upon being reminded of the general tendency of his writings, and of his example.

30th. I saw him in the evening, and found him chearful. Was informed, that he had, for his dinner, eaten heartily of a French duck pie and a pheasant.

Dec. 1. He was busied in destroying papers.—Gave to Mr. Langton and another person, to fair copy, some translations of the Greek epigrams, which he had made in the preceding nights, and transcribed the next morning, and they began to work on them.

3d. Finding his legs continue to swell, he signified to his physicians a strong desire to have them scarified, but they, unwilling to put him to pain, and fearing a mortification, declined advising it. He afterwards consulted his surgeon, and he performed the operation on one leg.

4th. I visited him: the scarification, made yesterday in his leg, appeared to have had little effect.—He said to me, that he was easier in his mind, and as fit to die at that instant, as he could be a year hence.—He requested me to receive the sacrament with him on Sunday, the next day. Complained of great weakness, and of phantoms that haunted his imagination.

5th. Being Sunday, I communicated with him and Mr. Langton, and other of his friends, as many as nearly filled the room. Mr. Strahan, who was constant in his attendance on him throughout his illness, performed the office. Previous to reading the exhortation, Johnson knelt, and, with a degree of fervour that I had never been witness to before,

uttered the following most eloquent and energetic prayer :

‘ Almighty and most merciful Father, I am now, as
 ‘ to human eyes it seems, about to commemorate, for
 ‘ the last time, the death of thy son Jesus Christ,
 ‘ our Saviour and Redeemer. Grant, O Lord, that
 ‘ my whole hope and confidence may be in his me-
 ‘ rits and in thy mercy : forgive and accept my late
 ‘ conversion ; enforce and accept my imperfect repen-
 ‘ tance ; make this commemoration of him available
 ‘ to the confirmation of my faith, the establishment
 ‘ of my hope, and the enlargement of my charity ; and
 ‘ make the death of thy son Jesus effectual to my re-
 ‘ demption. Have mercy upon me, and pardon the
 ‘ multitude of my offences. Bless my friends, have
 ‘ mercy upon all men. Support me by the grace of
 ‘ thy holy spirit in the days of weakness, and at the
 ‘ hour of death, and receive me, at my death, to ever-
 ‘ lasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ.—
 ‘ Amen.’

Upon rising from his knees, after the office was concluded, he said, that he dreaded to meet God in a state of idiocy, or with opium in his head ; and, that having now communicated with the effects of a dose upon him, he doubted if his exertions were the genuine operations of his mind, and repeated from bishop Taylor this sentiment, ‘ That little, that has
 ‘ been omitted in health, can be done to any purpose
 ‘ in sickness *.

6th.

* He very much admired, and often in the course of his illness recited, from the conclusion of old Isaac Walton’s life of bishop Sanderfon, the following pathetic request :

6th. I again visited him. Before my departure, Dr. Brocklesby came in, and, taking him by the wrist, Johnson gave him a look of great contempt, and ridiculed the judging of his disorder by the pulse. He complained, that the farcocele had again made its appearance, and asked, if a puncture would not relieve him, as it had done the year before: the doctor answered, that it might, but that his surgeon was the best judge of the effect of such an operation. Johnson, upon this, said, ‘How many men in a year
‘die through the timidity of those whom they con-
‘sult for health! I want length of life, and you fear
‘giving me pain, which I care not for.’

8th. I visited him with Mr. Langton, and found him dictating to Mr. Strahan another will, the former being, as he had said at the time of making it, a temporary one. On our entering the room, he said, ‘God
‘bless you both.’ I arrived just time enough to direct the execution, and also the attestation of it. After he had published it, he desired Mr. Strahan to say the Lord’s prayer, which he did, all of us joining. Johnson, after it, uttered, extempore, a few pious ejaculations.

9th. I saw him in the evening, and found him dictating, to Mr. Strahan, a codicil to the will he had

‘Thus this pattern of meekness and primitive innocence
‘changed this for a better life:—’tis now too late to wish,
‘that mine may be like his; for I am in the eighty-fifth year
‘of my age, and God knows it hath not; but, I most humbly
‘beseech Almighty God, that my death may; and I do as earn-
‘estly beg, that, if any reader shall receive any satisfaction from
‘this very plain, and, as true relation, he will be so charitable as
‘to say, Amen.’

made the evening before. I assisted them in it, and received from the testator a direction, to insert a devise to his executors of the house at Lichfield, to be sold for the benefit of certain of his relations, a bequest of fundry pecuniary and specific legacies, a provision for the annuity of 70*l.* for Francis, and, after all, a devise of all the rest, residue, and remainder of his estate and effects, to his executors, in trust for the said Francis Barber, his executors and administrators; and, having dictated accordingly, Johnson executed and published it as a codicil to his will *.

He was now so weak as to be unable to kneel, and lamented, that he must pray sitting, but, with an effort, he placed himself on his knees, while Mr. Strahan repeated the Lord's Prayer. During the whole of the evening, he was much composed and resigned. Being become very weak and helpless, it was

* How much soever I approve of the practice of rewarding the fidelity of servants, I cannot but think that, in testamentary dispositions in their favour, some discretion ought to be exercised; and that, in scarce any instance they are to be preferred to those who are allied to the testator either in blood or by affinity. Of the merits of this servant, a judgment may be formed from what I shall hereafter have occasion to say of him. It was hinted to me many years ago, by his master, that he was a loose fellow; and I learned from others, that, after an absence from his service of some years, he married. In his search of a wife, he picked up one of those creatures with whom, in the disposal of themselves, no contrariety of colour is an obstacle. It is said, that soon after his marriage, he became jealous, and, it may be supposed, that he continued so, till, by presenting him first with one, and afterwards with another daughter, of her own colour, his wife put an end to all his doubts on that score. Notwithstanding which, Johnson, in the excess of indiscriminating benevolence, about a year before his death, took the wife and both the children, into his house, and made them a part of his family; and, by the codicil to his will, made a disposition in his favour, to the amount in value of full fifteen hundred pounds.

thought

thought necessary that a man should watch with him all night; and one was found in the neighbourhood, who, for half a crown a night, undertook to sit up with, and assist him. When the man had left the room, he, in the presence and hearing of Mr. Strahan and Mr. Langton, asked me, where I meant to bury him. I answered, doubtless, in Westminster abbey: 'If,' said he, 'my executors think it proper to mark the spot of my interment by a stone, let it be so placed as to protect my body from injury.' I assured him it should be done. Before my departure, he desired Mr. Langton to put into my hands, money to the amount of upwards of 100l. with a direction to keep it till called for.

10th. This day at noon I saw him again. He said to me, that the male nurse to whose care I had committed him, was unfit for the office. 'He is,' said he, 'an idiot, as awkward as a turnspit just put into the wheel, and as sleepy as a dormouse.' Mr. Cruikshank came into the room, and, looking on his scarified leg, saw no sign of a mortification.

11th. At noon, I found him dozing, and would not disturb him.

12th. Saw him again; found him very weak, and, as he said, unable to pray.

13th. At noon, I called at the house, but went not into his room, being told, that he was dozing. I was further informed by the servants, that his appetite was totally gone, and that he could take no sustenance. At eight in the evening, of the same day, word was brought me by Mr. Sastres, to whom, in his last moments, he uttered these words, 'Jam moriturus,' that, at a quarter past seven, he had, without a groan, or the least sign of pain or uneasiness, yielded his last breath.

At

At eleven, the same evening, Mr. Langton came to me, and, in an agony of mind, gave me to understand, that our friend had wounded himself in several parts of the body. I was shocked at the news; but, upon being told that he had not touched any vital part, was easily able to account for an action, which would else have given us the deepest concern. The fact was, that conceiving himself to be full of water, he had done that, which he had often solicited his medical assistants to do, made two or three incisions in his lower limbs, vainly hoping for some relief from the flux that might follow.

Early the next morning, Frank came to me; and, being desirous of knowing all the particulars of this transaction, I interrogated him very strictly concerning it, and received from him answers to the following effect:

That, at eight in the morning of the preceding day, upon going into the bedchamber, his master, being in bed, ordered him to open a cabinet, and give him a drawer in it; that he did so, and that out of it his master took a case of lancets, and choosing one of them, would have conveyed it into the bed, which Frank, and a young man that sat up with him, seeing, they seized his hand, and intreated him not to do a rash action: he said he would not; but drawing his hand under the bed-clothes, they saw his arm move. Upon this, they turned down the clothes, and saw a great effusion of blood, which soon stopped—That soon after, he got at a pair of scissors that lay in a drawer by him, and plunged them deep in the calf of each leg—That immediately they sent for Mr. Cruikshank, and the apothecary, and they, or one of them, dressed the wounds—That he then fell into that dozing which
carried

carried him off.—That it was conjectured he lost eight or ten ounces of blood; and that this effusion brought on the dozing, though his pulse continued firm till three o'clock.

That this act was not done to hasten his end, but to discharge the water that he conceived to be in him, I have not the least doubt. A dropfy was his disease; he looked upon himself as a bloated carcase; and, to attain the power of easy respiration, would have undergone any degree of temporary pain. He dreaded neither punctures nor incisions, and, indeed, defied the trochar and the lancet: he had often reproached his physicians and surgeon with cowardice; and, when Mr. Cruikshank scarified his leg, he cried out—
 ‘Deeper, deeper;—I will abide the consequence:
 ‘you are afraid of your reputation, but that is no-
 ‘thing to me.’——To those about him, he said,—
 ‘You all pretend to love me, but you do not love
 ‘me so well as I myself do.’

I have been thus minute in recording the particulars of his last moments, because I wished to attract attention to the conduct of this great man, under the most trying circumstances human nature is subject to. Many persons have appeared possessed of more serenity of mind in this awful scene; some have remained unmoved at the dissolution of the vital union; and, it may be deemed a discouragement from the severe practice of religion, that Dr. Johnson, whose whole life was a preparation for his death, and a conflict with natural infirmity, was disturbed with terror at the prospect of the grave. Let not this relax the circumspection of any one. It is true, that natural firmness of spirit, or the confidence

confidence of hope, may buoy up the mind to the last; but, however heroic an undaunted death may appear, it is not what we should pray for. As Johnson lived the life of the righteous, his end was that of a Christian: he strictly fulfilled the injunction of the apostle, to work out his salvation with fear and trembling; and, though his doubts and scruples were certainly very distressing to himself, they give his friends a pious hope, that he, who added to almost all the virtues of Christianity, that religious humility which its great Teacher inculcated, will, in the fullness of time, receive the reward promised to a patient continuance in well-doing.

A few days after his departure, Dr. Brocklesby and Mr. Cruikshank, who, with great assiduity and humanity, (and I must add, generosity, for neither they, nor Dr. Heberden, Dr. Warren, nor Dr. Butter, would accept any fees) had attended him, signified a wish, that his body might be opened. This was done, and the report made was to this effect:

Two of the valves of the aorta ossified.

The air-cells of the lungs unusually distended.

One of the kidneys destroyed by the pressure of the water.

The liver schirrous.

A stone in the gall-bladder, of the size of a common gooseberry.

On Monday the 20th of December, his funeral was celebrated and honoured by a numerous attendance of his friends, and among them, by particular invitation, of as many of the literary club as were then in town, and not prevented by engagements. The dean of Westminster, upon my application, would gladly

gladly have performed the ceremony of his interment, but, at the time, was much indisposed in his health; the office, therefore, devolved upon the senior prebendary, Dr. Taylor, who performed it with becoming gravity and seriousness. All the prebendaries, except such as were absent in the country, attended in their surplices and hoods: they met the corpse at the west door of their church, and performed, in the most respectful manner, all the honours due to the memory of so great a man.

His body, enclosed in a leaden coffin, is deposited in the south transept of the abbey, near the foot of Shakespeare's monument, and close to the coffin of his friend Garrick. Agreeable to his request, a stone of black marble covers his grave, thus inscribed:

SAMUEL JOHNSON, L. L. D.

Obiit XIII die Decembris,

Anno Domini

MDCC LXXXIV,

Ætatis suæ LXXV.

Copy of Dr. JOHNSON's WILL, and of the
CODICIL thereto subjoined.

In the name of God. Amen. I SAMUEL JOHNSON, being in full possession of my faculties, but fearing this night may put an end to my life, do ordain this my last will and testament. I bequeath to God a soul polluted with many sins, but I hope purified by repentance, and I trust redeemed by Jesus Christ*. I leave seven hundred and fifty pounds in the hands of Bennet Langton, Esq; three hundred pounds in the hands of Mr. Barclay and Mr. Perkins,

* This declaration is, in substance, the same with that in the former will, but varies in the expression.

brewers;

brewers; one hundred and fifty pounds in the hands of Dr. Percy, bishop of Dromore; one thousand pounds, three per cent. annuities in the public funds, and one hundred pounds now lying by me in ready money; all these before-mentioned sums and property I leave, I say, to Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir John Hawkins, and Dr. William Scott, of Doctors Commons, in trust for the following uses; That is to say, to pay to the representatives of the late William Innys, book-feller, in St. Paul's Church Yard, the sum of two hundred pounds; to Mrs. White, my female servant, one hundred pounds stock in the three per cent. annuities aforesaid. The rest of the aforesaid sums of money and property, together with my books, plate, and household-furniture, I leave to the before-mentioned Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir John Hawkins, and Dr. William Scott, also in trust, to be applied, after paying my debts, to the use of Francis Barber, my man-servant, a negro, in such manner as they shall judge most fit and available to his benefit. And I appoint the aforesaid Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir John Hawkins, and Dr. William Scott, sole executors of this my last will and testament, hereby revoking all former wills and testaments whatsoever. In witness whereof I hereunto subscribe my name, and affix my seal, this eighth day of December, 1784.

SAM. JOHNSON, (L. S.)

Signed, sealed, published, declared, and delivered by the said testator, as his last will and testament, in the presence of us, the word *two* being first inserted in the opposite page.

GEORGE STRAHAN.

JOHN DES MOULINS.

By

By way of codicil to my last will and testament, I SAMUEL JOHNSON, give, devise, and bequeath, my messuage or tenement, situate at Lichfield, in the county of Stafford, with the appurtenances, in the tenure or occupation of Mrs. Bond, of Lichfield aforesaid, or of Mr. Hinchman, her under-tenant, to my executors in trust, to sell and dispose of the same; and the money arising from such sale I give and bequeath as follows, viz. to Thomas and Benjamin the sons of Fisher Johnson, late of Leicester, and Whiting, daughter of Thomas Johnson, late of Coventry, and the grand-daughter of the said Thomas Johnson, one full and equal fourth part each; but in case there shall be more grand-daughters than one of the said Thomas Johnson, living at the time of my decease, I give and bequeath the part or share of that one to, and equally between such grand-daughters. I give and bequeath to the Rev. Mr. Rogers, of Berkley, near Froome, in the county of Somerset, the sum of one hundred pounds, requesting him to apply the same towards the maintenance of Elizabeth Herne, a lunatic. I also give and bequeath to my god-children, the son and daughter of Mauritius Low, painter, each of them, one hundred pounds of my stock in the three per cent. consolidated annuities, to be applied and disposed of by and at the discretion of my Executors, in the education or settlement in the world of them my said legatees. Also, I give and bequeath to Sir John Hawkins, one of my Executors, the Annales Ecclesiastici of Baronius and Holingshed's and Stowe's Chronicles, and also an octavo Common Prayer Book. To Bennet Langton, Esq; I give and bequeath my Polyglot Bible.

To Sir Joshua Reynolds, my great French Dictionary, by Martiniere, and my own copy of my folio English Dictionary, of the last revision. To Dr. William Scott, one of my Executors, the Dictionnaire de Commerce, and Lectius's edition of the Greek Poets. To Mr. Windham, *Poetæ Græci Heroici per Henricum Stephanum*. To the Rev. Mr. Strahan, vicar of Islington, in Middlesex, Mills's Greek Testament, Beza's Greek Testament by Stephens, all my Latin Bibles, and my Greek Bible by Wechelius. To Dr. Heberden, Dr. Brocklesby, Dr. Butter, and Mr. Cruikshank the surgeon who attended me, Mr. Holder my apothecary, Gerard Hamilton, Esq; Mrs. Gardiner, of Snow-hill, Mrs. Frances Reynolds, Mr. Hoole, and the Rev. Mr. Hoole, his son, each a book at their election, to keep as a token of remembrance. I also give and bequeath to Mr. John des Moulins, two hundred pounds consolidated three per cent. annuities; and to Mr. Sastres, the Italian master, the sum of five pounds, to be laid out in books of piety for his own use. And whereas the said Bennet Langton hath agreed, in consideration of the sum of seven hundred and fifty pounds, mentioned in my will to be in his hands, to grant and secure an annuity of seventy pounds, payable during the life of me and my servant Francis Barber, and the life of the survivor of us, to Mr. George Stubbs in trust for us; my mind and will is, that in case of my decease before the said agreement shall be perfected, the said sum of seven hundred and fifty pounds, and the bond for securing the said sum, shall go to the said Francis Barber; and I hereby give and bequeath to him the same, in lieu of the bequest in his favour, contained in my said will.

And

And I hereby empower my Executors to deduct and retain all expences that shall or may be incurred in the execution of my said will, or of this codicil thereto, out of such estate and effects as I shall die possessed of. All the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate and effects, I give and bequeath to my said Executors, in trust for the said Francis Barber, his Executors and Administrators. Witness my hand and seal this ninth day of December, 1784.

SAM. JOHNSON, (L. S.)

Signed, sealed, published, declared, and delivered by the said Samuel Johnson, as, and for a Codicil to his last Will and Testament, in the presence of us, who, in his presence, and at his request, and also in the presence of each other, have hereto subscribed our names as witnesses.

JOHN COPLEY.

WILLIAM GIBSON.

HENRY COLE.

P O S T S C R I P T.

THE foregoing instrument carries into effect the resolution of Dr. Johnson, to be, with respect to his negro-servant, *nobilissimus*; but the many lavish encomiums that have been bestowed on this act of bounty, make it necessary to mention some particulars, subsequent to his death, that will serve to shew the short-sightedness of human wisdom, and the effects of ill-directed benevolence.

The amount of the bequest to this man, may be estimated at a sum little short of 1500l. and that to the testator's relations named in the will at 235l. (the sum which the house at Lichfield produced at a sale by auction) who, being five in number, divided the same, after deducting the expences of the sale, in the following proportions; that is to say, three of the relations took 58l. 15s. 0d. each, and each of two others, the representatives of a fourth, 29l. 7s. 6d.

A few days after the doctor's decease, Francis came to me, and informed me, that a relation of his master's, named Humphrey Heely, who, with his wife, had lately, upon the request of the doctor to the bishop of Rochester, been placed in an alms-house at Westminster, was in great necessity, as wanting money to buy bedding and cloaths. I told him, that seeing he was so great a gainer by his master's will, as to be possessed of almost the whole of his fortune, it behoved him to have compassion on this his relation, and to supply his wants. His reply was,—‘ I cannot afford it.’

From

From the time of the doctor's decease, myself, and my colleagues the other executors, answered all the calls of Francis for money. On the 6th day of September 1785, we had advanced him 106l. By the 13th of December following, he had received of Mr. Langton for his annuity, and of Mess. Barclay and Perkins for interest, as much as made that sum 183l. and on the 15th of the same month, a year and two days after his master's death, he came to me, saying, that he wanted more money, for that a few halfpence was all that he had left. Upon my settling with him in August last, it appeared that, exclusive of his annuity, he had received 337l. and, after delivering to him the bond for 150l. mentioned in the will*, I paid him a balance of 196l. 15s. 4d. $\frac{3}{4}$.

I had no sooner closed my account, than I sent for Heely, who appeared to be an old man and lame, having one leg much shorter than the other, but of an excellent understanding. The style of his discourse was so correct and grammatical, that it called to my remembrance that of Johnson. The account he gave me of himself and his fortunes was to the following effect:

That he was born in the year 1714, and that his relation to Johnson was by marriage, his first wife being a Ford, and the daughter of Johnson's mother's brother.—That himself had been a wholesale ironmonger, and the owner of an estate in Warwickshire, which he farmed himself, but that losses, and some indiscretions on his part, had driven him to Scotland; and that, in his return on foot, with his wife, from

* He had before received 45l. for interest thereon.

Newcastle,

Newcastle, she died on the road in his arms ;—that, some years after, he was, by Sir Thomas Robinson, made keeper of the Tap at Ranelagh house, and that he married again ; but that not being able to endure the capricious insolence with which he was treated, Mr. Garrick took him under his protection, and would have found a place for him in his theatre, but lived not to be able to do it ; and that these, and other misfortunes and disappointments, had brought him to the condition, as he described it, of a poor, reduced old man.—He added, that Dr. Johnson had been very liberal to him ; and, as one instance of his kindness, mentioned, that, about three weeks before his decease, he had applied to him for assistance ; and, upon stating his reasons for troubling him, was bid, rather harshly, to be silent ;—‘ For,’ said the doctor, ‘ it is enough to say that you are in want ; I enquire not into the causes of it : here is money for your relief* :’—but that, immediately recollecting himself, he

* We have here an instance of that asperity of temper with which Johnson has been frequently charged, but without any allowance for natural infirmity, or any consideration of his endeavours to correct it, or his readiness to atone for the pain it might sometimes give, by a kind and gentle treatment of the person offended. The truth of the matter is, that his whole life was a conflict with his passions and humours, and that few persons bore reprehension with more patience than himself. After his decease, I found among his papers an anonymous letter, that seemed to have been written by a person who had long had his eye on him, and remarked the offensive particulars in his behaviour, his propensity to contradiction, his want of deference to the opinions of others, his contention for victory over those with whom he disputed, his local prejudices and aversions, and other his evil habits in conversation, which made his acquaintance shunned by many, who, as a man of genius

he changed his tone, and mildly said,—‘If I have spoken roughly to you, impute it to the distraction of my mind, and the petulance of a sick man.’—Describing his present condition, he said, that he and his wife were in want of every necessary, and that neither of them had a change of any one article of raiment.

To be better informed of his circumstances, I visited this person in the alms-house, and was there a witness to such a scene of distress as I had never till then beheld. A sorry bed, with scarce any covering on it, two or three old trunks and boxes, a few broken chairs, and an old table, were all the furniture of the room. I found him smoking, and, while I was talking with him, a ragged boy, about ten years of age, came in from the garden, and upon my enquiring who he was, the old man said—‘This is a child whom a worthless father has left on our hands: I took him to keep at four shillings a week, and for four years maintenance have not been able to get more than five pounds four shillings: the poor child is an idiot, he cannot repeat the Lord’s Prayer, and is unable to count five: we know not how to dispose of him, and, if we did, we could hardly prevail on

genius and worth, highly esteemed him. It was written with great temper, in a spirit of charity, and with a due acknowledgment of those great talents with which he was endowed, but contained in it several home truths. In short, it was such a letter as many a one on the receipt of it would have destroyed. On the contrary, Johnson preserved it, and placed it in his bureau, in a situation so obvious, that, whenever he opened that repository of his papers, it might look him in the face; and I have not the least doubt, that he frequently perused and reflected on its contents, and endeavoured to correct his behaviour by an address which he could not but consider as a friendly admonition.

‘ ourselves

‘ ourselves to part with him; for it is a harmless,
‘ loving creature: we divide our morsel with him,
‘ and are just able to keep him from starving.’

Upon enquiring into the means of this poor man’s subsistence, he informed me, that the endowment of the alms-houses, in one of which he lived, yielded him an allowance of half a crown a week, and half a chaldron of coals at Christmas. That his wife bought milk and sold it again, and thereby was able to get about a shilling a day. The scantiness of his income, he said, had obliged him and his wife to study the art of cheap living, and he felicitated himself that they were become such proficient therein, as to be able to abstain from drinking, except at their supper meal, when, as he said, they each indulged in a pint of beer, which sufficed them for four and twenty hours. He told me all this in a tremulous tone of voice that indicated a mind that had long struggled with affliction, but without the least murmur at his hard fortune, or complaint of the doctor’s neglect of him: in short, he appeared to me such an exemplar of meekness and patience in adversity, as the best of men, in similar circumstances, might wish to imitate.

Johnson had also a first cousin, Elizabeth Herne, a lunatic, whom, upon her discharge from Bethlem hospital as incurable, he had placed in a mad-house at Bethnal green. A lady of the name of Prowse, had bequeathed to her an annuity of 10l. and Johnson constantly paid the bills for her keeping, which, amounting to 25l. a year, made him a benefactor to her of the difference between those two sums.

The doctor, by his will, bequeathed to the reverend Mr. Rogers, who had married the daughter of Mrs. Prowse, 100l. towards the maintenance of the lunatic; but he, probably considering that the interest of that sum would fall far short of what Johnson had been used to contribute, and that the burthen of supporting her would lie on himself, renounced the legacy. Had the doctor left her, for her life, the dividends of 500l. part of his stock, she had sustained no loss at his death: as the matter now stands, I must apply the 100l. for her maintenance, and, if she lives to exhaust it, must seek out the place of her last legal settlement, and remit her to the care of a parish *.

That the name of the poor man Heely occurs not in the will, and that no better a provision is therein made for the lunatic Herne, than a legacy which may fail to support her through life, can no otherwise be accounted for, than by the doctor's postponing that last solemn act of his life, and his making a disposition of what he had to leave, under circumstances that disabled him from recollecting either their rela-

* Of the craft and selfishness of the doctor's negro-servant, the following is a notable instance. At the time of his master's death, Mrs. Herne's maintenance was about 30l. in arrear. I was applied to for the money, and shewed the bill to him, upon which he immediately went to the mad-house, and endeavoured to prevail on the keeper thereof to charge it on the legacy; but he refused to do it, saying, that the lunatic was placed there by Dr. Johnson, and that it was a debt incurred in his life-time, and, by consequence, was payable out of his effects. When this would not do, this artful fellow came to me, and pretended that he could bring a woman to swear that there was nothing due; and, upon my telling him, that I should, notwithstanding, pay the bill, he said, he saw there was no good intended for him, and in anger left me.

tion to him, or the distresses they severally laboured under. Any other supposition would be injurious to the memory of a man, who, by his private memoranda in my possession, appears to have applied near a fourth part of his income in acts of beneficence.

The above facts are so connected with the transactions of Dr. Johnson in the latter days of his life, that they are part of his history; and the mention of them may serve as a caveat against ostentatious bounty, favour to negroes, and testamentary dispositions *in extremis*.

. It will afford some satisfaction to the compassionate reader to know, that the means of benefiting Heely, and some others of Dr. Johnson's relations, whom he had either totally neglected, or slightly noticed, have been found out and rendered practicable by Mr. Langton. That gentleman, to whom the doctor had given his manuscript Latin poems, having got for them of the booksellers 20l. with that benignity which is but one of his excellent qualities, had determined to divide the same among the doctor's relations. And whereas the doctor died indebted to the estate of the late Mr. Beauclerk, in the sum of 30l. lady Diana Beauclerk, his relict and executrix, upon the receipt thereof, and being informed of Mr. Langton's intention, in a spirit of true benevolence requested, that she might be permitted to add that sum to the former, and, accordingly, deposited it in his hands. Part of this money has been applied in relieving the wants of Heely and his wife, and the rest will be disposed of among those relations that shall appear to stand most in need of help; and, as a farther relief to Heely, and for the benefit of the idiot-boy, measures are taking to compel the father to maintain him, and eventually to settle him with the parish, upon which he has ultimately a legal claim for relief and maintenance.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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ERRATA.

- Page 134, line 4, for *raisonnée*, read *raisonnée*.
— 183, line 28, for *Metnor*, read *Mentor*.
— 245, in the note, for *the way leading from the outer court*, read *leading from Broad street*.
— 247, line antepenult. for *procure*, read *of procuring*.
— 274, line 21, for *examplars*, read *exemplars*.
— 406, line 4, for *or*, read *of*.
— 486, line 20, for *Thompson*, read *Thomson*.
— 600, line 21, for *exemplar* read *exemplar*.

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